Daniel Sandford.

SERMONS,

FOR THE USE OF

SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES.

1800.

BRITISH MUSEUM

SERMONS,

FOR THE USE OF

SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES.

BY

JOHN NAPLETON, D. D.

CANON RESIDENTIARY OF HEREFORD, CHANCELLOR OF THE DIOCESE,
CHAPLAIN TO THE LORD BISHOP OF HEREFORD.

PRECEPT UPON PRECEPT, LINE UPON LINE.

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1800.

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO
THE HONOURABLE
EDWARD FOLEY,
OF STOKE EDITH,
IN THE COUNTY OF HEREFORD,
KNIGHT IN PARLIAMENT FOR THE COUNTY OF WORCESTER.

DEAR SIR,

IT has not been unuſual in a former age, for a Parochial Miniſter to inſcribe a volume of religious diſcourſes to the Patron of his Church; as a natural expreſſion of gratitude for the honour of the appointment, and, poſſibly, as a modeſt intimation that he had attended to the duties of it. In imitation of this goodly cuſtom, and as a teſtimony of friendſhip, I offer you theſe ſermons. I do not pretend to lay before you the reaſoning, erudition, or eloquence, of the excellent perſons whom I follow: but a plain expoſition of chriſtian doctrine and precept, and an unadorned perſuaſive to belief and practice, ſuited to the hearers and readers whom it is my aim to benefit. While you are developing and heightening the natural beauties of a Principal Situation in this favoured county, you will approve a ſimilar at-

tention to the Moral Culture of its inhabitants; wiſhing to ſee it, in every view, a Paradiſe, the ſeat of pleaſure and of innocence. It is ſo, I may ſay without reſerve, to ſome of its inhabitants: to whom I deſire particularly to dedicate this volume. They may derive from it a confirmation of the Principles and Reſolutions, which they are learning from their Parents: and ſo I may have the happineſs of contributing to make them worthy deſcendants of their honoured Grandfather; and proper repreſentatives of a Family, diſtinguiſhed for their Chriſtian Piety, their liberal encouragement of uſeful Education,* their attachment to the Civil Conſtitution, and their munificence to the Church,* of England.

I am, DEAR SIR,

Your faithful friend,

JOHN NAPLETON.

STOKE EDITH,
April 14, 1800.

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* The alluſion is, to the ample endowment, and public utility, of Stourbridge School, in the county of Worceſter; and the large augmentations of the Eccleſiaſtical Benefices of Newent, in the dioceſe of Glouceſter, and Tarrington, Dormington, Mordiford, and St. Peter's, in the dioceſe of Hereford.

PREFACE.

THE deſign of this publication is to furniſh the Maſters of Schools and Families with a volume comprehending, in a ſmall compaſs, the doctrines and precepts of Chriſtianity, for the more eaſy inſtruction of their reſpective ſocieties.

In the eighteen firſt ſermons I have followed the line of the Church Catechiſm: which preferable method I have purſued with the greater pleaſure, becauſe it correſponds with the forcible recommendation of Catechetical Inſtruction given by my revered Friend and Patron:* whom I cannot mention on this

* See THE LORD BISHOP OF HEREFORD's Charge to his Clergy, at his Primary Viſitation, 1789.

occaſion, without Recording (if theſe pages ſhould happen to ſurvive the preſent hour) how juſtly he poſſeſſes the high Reſpect of his Dioceſe, for his exemplary and beneficial reſidence, his extenſive liberalities, and his munificence and activity, cooperating with them and other benefactors, in the Reſtoration of the Cathedral Church.

In the ſix laſt ſermons I have enlarged on the principal ſubjects: namely, the Goodneſs of GOD to man, from the creation to the conſummation of all things: the wonderful Plan of Mercy, in which his Goodneſs is diſplayed: the excellence of the Revelation, by which this Plan has been gradually unfolded: the reward, and puniſhment, attending the performance, or neglect, of the conditions of it: the

wickedneſs and danger of obſtructing, and the wiſdom and happineſs of promoting, the accompliſhment of it.

I have been led to offer this ſmall aſſiſtance to the Heads of Schools and Families, whom, with the Legiſlature and Clergy, I conſider as the Conſervators of the National Religion, by contemplating, with every ſerious perſon, the univerſal importance of chriſtian education and domeſtic inſtruction, and the peculiar exigence of the preſent time.

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ERRATA.

Page 5, last line, add, public buildings raised.
—— 60, note, second line, dele Cicero.
—— 159, line 10, read *flows*.
—— 231, line 10, after life, a full stop.
—— 251, Note ¶, transfer to knowledge, p. 252.
—— 256, last line, read *complete*
—— 286, ——— read *increasing*.
—— 315, line 8, read *measure*.

SERMONS

FOR THE USE OF

SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES.

SERMON I.

ON THE CREED.

II TIM. III. 15.

FROM A CHILD THOU HAST KNOWN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, WHICH ARE ABLE TO MAKE THEE WISE UNTO SALVATION, THROUGH FAITH WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS.

GOD hath, at ſundry times, and in divers manners, ſpoken to mankind. He appeared unto Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. He ſpake to Noah before the flood and after it. He talked with Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob. He gave laws to the Children of Iſrael by the hand of Moſes; and afterwards taught them by his Prophets. Laſtly, he made known his Will by his ſon Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles.

The things which God hath thus ſpoken to mankind by Himſelf, by his Prophets, by his Son Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles, are

written in the HOLY BIBLE; which we therefore call the Word of God.

Every Chriſtian hath the Bible in his hand, and may learn from it his duty and his expectations: for he there may read what God requires us to BELIEVE; what he commands us to DO; and how he will REWARD or PUNISH us according to our behaviour. To aſſiſt the Chriſtian in gaining this knowledge, and to perſuade him to live agreeably to it, the Bible is read to him in Churches: the chief parts of it are explained to him in ſermons: he is adviſed to read it at home; and to follow it as his guide to everlaſting happineſs.

That the things which God requires us to BELIEVE, as they are ſet forth in the Holy Bible, may be more eaſily remembered, they are brought together into one ſhort account, which is called the Apoſtles' Creed or Belief. It is called the Creed of the Apoſtles, becauſe the things contained therein were believed and taught by the Apoſtles; and becauſe the Creed was made, part in the time of the Apoſtles, and part very ſoon after it.

The Creed is as follows.

"I believe in God the Father Almighty,

"Maker of Heaven and Earth." Every one who has the uſe of his ſenſes and underſtanding muſt believe in God, who made, ſupports, and governs, all things. This is an Article of Belief to all creatures that have reaſon, to Men and Angels; and it is here ſet down as the foundation of all Religion, and of Chriſtian Religion in particular. God is here called "the Father;" as he is the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. He is called the Father "Almighty," as having unbounded power, and abſolute dominion over all things. He is "the Maker of Hea-" ven and Earth;" that is, he made out of nothing all things that are; he made Us, our ſouls and bodies; the earth and all things which are therein; the heavenly bodies which we ſee, the ſun, the moon, and the ſtars; whatever bodies there are which we do not ſee.

"And in Jeſus Chriſt." The word "Jeſus" ſignifies a Saviour. St. Matthew tells us, our bleſſed Lord was called Jeſus becauſe "he ſhall ſave his people from their Sins."* The word "Chriſt" ſignifies Anointed. Anointing with Oil was the form of ſetting apart kings, prieſts, and prophets, to their

* Matthew i. 21.

ſeveral offices: and therefore "Chriſt" or Anointed means here ſet apart, or conſecrated, to the office of Saviour of Mankind; appointed to be their king, prieſt, and prophet. Jeſus is our king, as he governs and protects us: he is our prieſt, as he hath offered himſelf a ſacrifice for our ſins, and now pleadeth for us, and bleſſeth us: he is our prophet, as he hath declared the will of God, firſt in his own perſon, afterwards by his Apoſtles, and now declareth it by his written word.

"His only Son our Lord:" that is, the eternal ſon of God the Father; our Lord, both as he is God, of one ſubſtance with the Father, and as he is our redeemer and governour. Thus Thomas ſaid unto him, after he was riſen from the dead, "My Lord and "my God."*

"Who was conceived by the Holy Ghoſt, "born of the Virgin Mary." The Son of God took our nature upon him, and became man. He joined the human nature to the divine in one perſon. St. John tells us that "the Word," which means the Son of God, "was made fleſh."† St. Paul ſays, that "God ſent forth his ſon made of a

* John xx. 28. † John i. 14.

"woman."* That Chriſt was conceived by the Holy Ghoſt, we have the witneſs of an Angel; who ſaid unto Joſeph, "fear not to "take unto thee Mary thy" (intended or eſpouſed) "wife; for that which is con- "ceived in her, is of the Holy Ghoſt."† We are told by St. Matthew, that Jeſus was born of the Virgin Mary, and ſo "it was "fulfilled which was ſpoken by the pro- "phet; behold a virgin ſhall be with child "and ſhall bring forth a ſon."‡

He "ſuffered under Pontius Pilate; was "crucified, dead, and buried; he deſcended "into Hell." Our bleſſed Lord ſuffered death, as an atonement for the ſins of men. God is pleaſed for his ſake to forgive us our ſins, if we believe in him, repent, and lead a good life. Pontius Pilate was governour of Judea, the country of the Jews, under the Romans, who were then maſters of it. He was perſuaded to condemn Chriſt to death, although he declared that he found no fault in him. He commanded him to be "cruci- "fied," or nailed to a croſs, becauſe that was, among the Romans, the ſevereſt me- thod of putting men to death. Chriſt was

* Galatians iv. 4. † Matth. i. 20. ‡ Matth. i. 23.

"dead and buried;" his ſoul departed out of his body, and his body was laid in the grave. "He deſcended into Hell." Hell frequently ſignifies the particular place prepared for the puniſhment of the wicked; but here it means only, in general, the place of the dead. As the lifeleſs body of Chriſt was carried to the grave, ſo his living ſoul went into the abode of departed ſpirits.

"The third day he roſe again from the "dead." Our Lord died on the ſixth day of the week, our Friday. He lay dead on the ſeventh day of the week, the Jewiſh ſabbath, our Saturday. He roſe from the dead the firſt day of the week following, our Sunday. He roſe therefore on the third day from his death. The prophets had foretold that he ſhould riſe again. He had himſelf declared that he ſhould riſe the third day. He raiſed himſelf from the dead accordingly; and he was ſeen by his diſciples, and talked with them at different times for forty days after his riſing.

"He aſcended into heaven, and ſitteth on "the right hand of God the Father Al-"mighty." In the preſence of his diſciples,

he was taken up from this earth, "and a "cloud received him out of their ſight."* As he went up, two Angels told them that he was gone into Heaven. He there "ſitteth "on the right hand of God." God is every where, although not ſeen. In Heaven he appears in glory to his holy Angels. Our bleſſed Lord is ſaid to ſit on his right hand, to ſignify that he hath dominion and government over all things.

"From thence he ſhall come to judge the "quick and the dead." The Holy Scriptures declare that this world in which we live ſhall, at God's appointed time, be deſtroyed: that Jeſus Chriſt ſhall come down from heaven with his holy Angels: that he ſhall ſit in judgment upon all mankind; upon the quick, thoſe who ſhall then be alive; and upon the dead, all thoſe who ſhall have lived and died from the beginning of the world to that day: that he will paſs ſentence upon every perſon according to his works, according to his thoughts, words, and actions: that he will take the good into a place of everlaſting happineſs: that he will ſend the wicked into a place of everlaſting puniſhment.

* Acts i. 9.

"I believe in the Holy Ghoſt," or the Holy Spirit. You have been baptized according to the command of Chriſt, "in the "name of the Father, and of the Son, and "of the Holy Ghoſt."* The Scriptures declare theſe three perſons to be one God. The Holy Ghoſt is called holy, firſt, as he is himſelf, by his all-perfect nature, eternally and unchangeably holy: ſecondly, as he makes us holy, if we will be guided by him; for he gives light to our underſtanding, that we may know our duty; and ſtrength to our wills, that we may perform it.

"The Holy Catholic Church." The Church is the whole congregation of Chriſtian people, who have lived, or do now live, or ſhall live, in all ages, and in all countries. Our bleſſed Lord began this Church with his diſciples; and declared "that the gates of hell "ſhall not prevail againſt it;"† that is, neither death by taking away the members of this Church, nor the Devil by tempting them to leave it, ſhall ever deſtroy it. The diſciples ſpread it over the face of the whole earth. It has continued above ſeventeen hundred years:

* Matth. xxviii. 19. † Matth. xvi. 18.

and we rely upon the promiſe of our Lord, that it will continue to the end of the world. The Church is "holy," becauſe it is dedicated to God, and engaged to be holy in belief and practice. It is called "catholic" or univerſal; firſt, to ſhew that we do not mean any particular company or ſociety of Chriſtians, as the Church of England or Ireland, but all Chriſtians throughout the whole world: ſecondly, to affirm that it is not like the Church of the Jews, confined to one place or nation, but is open to every country and every people.

"The Communion of Saints." The word "ſaints" means holy ones. It therefore ſignifies, in the firſt place, all Chriſtian perſons, members of the holy catholic church; they are ſaints or holy ones, as having devoted themſelves to God, and promiſed to be holy in heart and life. It ſignifies more properly, in the ſecond place, ſuch Chriſtian perſons as are, according to their promiſe, really and actually holy in heart and life. "The Communion" of ſaints is that connexion and fellowſhip, which all Chriſtians may and ought to have, and all good Chriſtians really and actually have, firſt, with

God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; under whoſe bleſſing and protection they abide: ſecondly, with the holy Angels, fellow ſervants of God with them; who are ſaid to rejoice in their well doing; who, when our Saviour was born, ſang glory to God, peace on earth, and good will to men; and miniſter to them who ſhall be heirs of this great ſalvation: thirdly, with all the bleſſed perſons, who have died in the true faith of Chriſt and the ſincere practice of righteouſneſs; following the ſteps of theſe Departed Saints in a virtuous courſe, and hoping to meet them in a place of reſt and happineſs: fourthly and laſtly, with all Chriſtians now living in every part of the world; though divided from them by place, yet joined with them by having the ſame faith in one Lord and Saviour, the ſame rule of life, the ſame ſacraments, the ſame expectations in a world to come.

"The forgiveneſs of ſins." Sin is diſobedience to the laws of God. It draws down upon the ſinner the diſpleaſure of God, and puniſhment in this world and in the world to come. From theſe evils our Saviour hath redeemed, or delivered, us by his

death. God is graciouſly pleaſed to receive us into his favour, and to withhold the puniſhment due to our ſins, on condition of our belief in Jeſus Chriſt, our hearty ſorrow, our immediate amendment, and continued obedience.

" The Reſurrection of the Body, and the " Life Everlaſting." Our bleſſed Lord raiſed his own body from the dead. The ſoul which dwelt in it before his death, returned into it again. He ſhewed himſelf to his Diſciples the ſame perſon that they had ſo long known, bearing alſo the marks of his late ſufferings. " Behold," ſays he, " my hands " and my feet, that it is I myſelf; handle " me, and ſee, for a ſpirit hath not fleſh " and bones, as ye ſee me have."* He had raiſed Lazarus, the daughter of Jairus, and the ſon of the widow of Nain. At his death, " the graves were opened, and many bodies " of ſaints which ſlept, aroſe; and" many " came out of the graves after he himſelf " was riſen, and went into the holy city" of Jeruſalem, " and appeared unto many."† He hath promiſed that " All that are in the " graves ſhall" one day "hear His voice, and

* Luke xxiv. 39. † Matth. xxvii. 52, 53.

" ſhall come forth; they that have done " good ſhall come forth unto the reſurrec- " tion of life," that is, ſhall riſe from the dead to a life of happineſs; " they that have " done evil, ſhall come forth unto the re- " ſurrection of damnation," that is, ſhall riſe from the dead to a ſtate of miſery.* He hath further aſſured us by his Apoſtle, if we live and die in his favour, that he will, when we riſe again, " by his almighty work- " ing, change the form of our vile bodies," (humbled by ſickneſs and death, the puniſh- ment of ſin,) " that they may be faſhioned " like unto His glorious body."† Our im- mortal ſouls being received into our glori- ous bodies, we ſhall live in perfect happineſs for ever.

* John v. 28, 29. † Philippians iii. 21.

SERMON II.

ON THE CREED.

JAMES II. 26.

AS THE BODY WITHOUT THE SPIRIT IS DEAD, SO FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD ALSO.

ALL theſe things you ſtedfaſtly believe. What manner of perſons ought you then to be in all your life and converſation? What ought to be your Thoughts, your Words, and your Actions?

As you believe in GOD, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of yourſelves and all things that are, you will be ever thankful to him for giving you your Being, your underſtanding, your ſenſes, and all the pleaſures which you enjoy. You will behold the heavens, the ſun, the moon, and the ſtars, the earth and all things that are on it, with the deepeſt reverence for the power, and wiſdom, and goodneſs, which made them out of nothing, ſupports them

continually, and grants unto you the uſe of them for your preſervation, comfort, and delight. You will remember that it is GOD who beſtows upon you the earth for your dwelling; who gives you the light of the ſun, the air which you breathe, the fruits of the earth, and the living creatures which are upon it. He affords them to you for the maintenance and comfort of this preſent life, and alſo as a foretaſte of greater bleſſings prepared for you in a life to come. You will therefore uſe all theſe his gifts with thankfulneſs and ſobriety. You will love the goodneſs of the Gracious Giver; you will admire his wiſdom; you will fear his power; you will endeavour in all things to obey his will. You will humbly hope for the continuance of his protection here, and for his everlaſting favour hereafter.

You believe that the Son of God has been pleaſed to come down from Heaven, in order to die for our ſins, to teach us his will, and to obtain for us everlaſting happineſs; and that he will come again, at the end of the world, to judge us. Your duty then is plain before you; to be thankful to him for his wonderful loving-kindneſs, to obey his

laws, to truſt in his gracious promiſes; conſtantly to prepare for that awful day, when he ſhall, by his righteous ſentence, fix your portion for ever. No man knoweth when that day will come, or when the end of the world will be; it will be prudent in us to remember, that to each of us the hour of our death will be the end of the world; for then the time of our trial on earth will be paſt; our ſouls will be placed, according to our behaviour, in a ſtate of happineſs or miſery; in this condition we ſhall await the day of Judgment, when Chriſt ſhall compleat that happineſs or miſery, and publicly pronounce our everlaſting doom. Between the day of death and the day of Judgment, there will be no benefit from repentance. Chriſt will judge us "according to the things done "in the body;"* as the tree falleth, ſo ſhall it lie; ſuch as the ſoul is when it departeth from the body, ſuch will it be, good or bad, happy or miſerable, when it ſhall be joined to the body again.

You believe that the Holy Ghoſt helpeth you, in learning your duty, and in performing it. Take care then to benefit by his

* 2 Corinthians v. 10.

divine aſſiſtance, Uſe your own beſt endeavours to know, and to do, every thing that is pleaſing to him. Employ the proper means of improving yourſelves in religious knowledge and practice. Read the Bible; hear Sermons; liſten to every one who is able to inſtruct you; to your Miniſter, your Parent, your Teacher, your Maſter or Miſtreſs, your Neighbour. Think again and again of the weighty reaſons, why you ought to live a virtuous life; conſider the goodneſs of God, his power, his juſtice; the reward which he offereth to you, and the puniſhment which he threateneth.

You have the honour and happineſs to be members of the Holy Catholic Church. You were, at your Baptiſm, given by your parents to Chriſt, to be his children and ſervants: at your Confirmation, you promiſed to believe in him, and to obey his laws: you renew your promiſe at the Lord's Supper, and in your daily worſhip. So long as you live agreeably to theſe engagements, you have all the benefits promiſed by Chriſt to his Church, his children and ſervants. You have the bleſſing and protection of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. You

have the good will of the holy Angels. You have fellowſhip with all good Chriſtians, living or deceaſed; joined with them by having the ſame Lord and Saviour, the ſame laws, and the ſame expectations. You have the forgiveneſs of your repented and forſaken ſins. You may look forward, with a holy hope, to the hour of death; when you ſhall be called to a place of reſt and pleaſure, and be received into the bleſſed company of Saints departed. You may, with humble confidence, carry your view ſtill further; to the day when Jeſus ſhall raiſe your mortal bodies, never more to be ſubject to pain, or ſickneſs, or decay; and give you perfect happineſs in a new everlaſting life.

What more weighty reaſons can I lay before you, why you ſhould "live ſoberly, "righteouſly, and godly, in this preſent "world?"* Fix therefore in your minds all theſe important truths. Call them frequently to your remembrance. Let them work upon your hearts, and govern your behaviour. For "Faith," or Belief, "without works" (the Apoſtle tells you) "is "like the body without the ſpirit" or ſoul.

* Titus ii. 12.

The body is neceſſary to bring the ſoul into the world, and to form the living man: but when the ſoul departeth, the body becomes lifeleſs earth, and the man is "no more "ſeen."* So Faith is needful to lead you to good works, and to make you Chriſtians; it is indeed a duty and a good work itſelf,† and is therefore neceſſary to render your other good works acceptable to God: but if your Faith do not actually lead you to good works, it is vain; and you are Chriſtians only in name. Uſe therefore all "dili-"gence to add to your Faith VIRTUE;"‡ then will you, by the grace of God, be true believers on earth, and, by his mercy in Chriſt Jeſus, bleſſed ſaints in heaven.

* Pſalm xxxix. 15.

† "This is the work of God," the work which God requires, "that ye believe in him whom he hath ſent," in Jeſus Chriſt. John vi. 29.

‡ 2 Peter i. 5.

SERMON III.

ON THE COMMANDMENTS---I. II.

MATTHEW XIX. 17.

IF THOU WILT ENTER INTO LIFE, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS.

THE things which God commands us to DO are plainly declared in the Holy Bible. You have ſome account of them in every book of the Old and New Teſtament: but you find them expreſſed more clearly and particularly, among the laws delivered to the Jews by Moſes and the Prophets, and in the laws given to Chriſtians by Jeſus and his Apoſtles. Many of the laws delivered to the Jews concerned Them only, in the land of Judea; being deſigned to order the ſervice of their Temple, and the government of their State. The reſt bind all mankind, in all countries, and in all ages; particularly us Chriſtians, to whom they are confirmed

and explained by our Bleſſed Lord and his Apoſtles. The chief of theſe laws delivered to the Jews, which bind all mankind, are brought together into a ſmall compaſs, in that ſolemn and awful declaration of THE WILL OF GOD, made by him on Mount Sinai;* which declaration, containing ten heads or articles, is called THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.†

The Firſt Commandment is, "Thou ſhalt "have none other gods but me:" that is, "thou ſhalt not acknowledge or worſhip any "falſe, or pretended, gods: thou ſhalt ac- "knowledge and worſhip Me only, JEHO- "VAH, GOD, the maker and governour of all "things." A great part of mankind had, from the firſt ages, fallen into ſhocking errors in belief and practice. One of theſe errors was this; they ſuppoſed that there were more gods than one, and accordingly worſhiped many falſe, or pretended, gods. The land of Egypt, out of which GOD had juſt brought the Children of Iſrael, and the land of Canaan, to which he was leading them, were ſtained with this abominable wickedneſs: even the family and father of righteous

* Exodus xix. and xx. † Deuteronomy iv. 13.

Abraham, from whom they ſprang, had not been free from it;* and they had been guilty of it themſelves. GOD therefore here guards them, and us, and all mankind, againſt this horrid abſurdity; and lays down this duty, as the neceſſary groundwork of our obedience to all his commandments, "thou ſhalt "worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only "ſhalt thou ſerve."†

The Second Commandment is, "Thou "ſhalt not make to thyſelf any graven "image, nor the likeneſs of any thing that "is in heaven above, or in the earth be-"neath, or in the water under the earth. "Thou ſhalt not bow down to them, nor "worſhip them." GOD is a ſpirit: we cannot ſee him with our eyes: we cannot perceive him by any other of our ſenſes: even when he ſpake to Moſes out of the burning buſh,‡ and to the Children of Iſrael "out of "the midſt of the fire,§ they ſaw him not," neither "any likeneſs of him, only they "heard a voice." Any endeavour therefore to repreſent him by any matter or body, is abſurd in itſelf, and a doing of diſhonour to

* Joſhua xxiv. 2. Geneſis xxxi. 19. † Matth. iv. 10.
‡ Exodus iii. § Deut. iv. 11, 12.

him. The nations who worſhiped falſe gods, made idols, that is, images or likeneſſes of them, in wood, ſtone, clay, or metal: they worſhiped theſe idols, and were therefore called idolaters. The worſhipers of GOD fell ſometimes into this wonderful folly and wickedneſs: and, while they offered, or pretended to offer, their prayers to the LORD their GOD, bowed down to idols. And this way, or pretence, of worſhiping GOD by bowing down to an idol, led them to the worſhip of falſe gods. GOD therefore here warns the Children of Iſrael, and us, and all mankind, againſt all idolatrous worſhip, whether of falſe gods, or of Himſelf.

"For I, the LORD thy GOD, am a jealous "GOD, and viſit the ſins of the fathers upon "the children unto the third and fourth ge- "neration of them that hate me: and ſhew "mercy unto thouſands, in them that love "me, and keep my commandments." "I "am a jealous God:" that is, "I will not "ſuffer the worſhip which is due to Me "alone, to be offered either to falſe gods, "or to idols under the notion or pretence "of offering it to Me." "I viſit the ſins of "the fathers upon the children unto the

" third and fourth generation of them that " hate me:" that is, " I will puniſh all " idolaters, in themſelves, and in their chil- " dren and poſterity unto the third and " fourth generation;" as many of their off- ſpring as they will ever, probably, live to ſee, and behold in them the conſequence of their ſins. " And I ſhew mercy unto thou- " ſands in them that love me, and keep my " commandments:" that is, " I will graci- " ouſly reward them who worſhip me only, " and not in an idolatrous manner, in them- " ſelves, and in their offspring for many " more than four generations." God, of his favour and bounty, promiſed to the Peo- ple of Iſrael, and to their children after them, an extraordinary ſhare of Earthly Bleſſings, ſuch as health, long life, and pro- ſperity, in the land which he gave them. He promiſed it on this condition, that they truly worſhiped him, and kept his command- ments. Whoever broke the condition, for- feited the benefit of the promiſe ſo made to himſelf and to his children after him; and the children neceſſarily loſt, through the diſobedience of the parent, the bleſſings of which they had no promiſe but on the con-

dition of his obedience. Whoever performed the condition, gained to himſelf the benefit of the promiſe; and preſerved it to his children after him, to be enjoyed by them ſo long as they alſo kept the condition. God ſpeaks not here of the rewards and puniſhments of Another World: in which he will aſſuredly deal with every perſon according to his own works. Nor does he ſpèak of this extraordinary ſhare of Earthly Bleſſings (to be given to the true worſhiper and his offspring, and denied to the idolater and his offspring,) to any but the People of Iſrael, dwelling in the land which he gave them, for a certain time. To the People of Iſrael from the end of their captivity in Babylon, to the reſt of mankind in all ages, and to us Chriſtians in particular, God divides the goods and evils of the preſent life, partly indeed according to our behaviour, but not entirely. We generally ſuffer in this world by our vices, and are benefited by our virtues: but the complete and certain recompenſe of each will be given to us in a world to come. We often ſuffer by the faults of Others alſo, and are benefited by their goodneſs. Of this we have frequent

experience in the caſe of Parent and Child. The ſins of the Fathers do often, by the natural courſe of things, afflict their children. One Wicked Parent waſtes his ſubſtance by idleneſs and expence, teaches his children no way of gaining a livelihood, and leaves them in want. Another poiſons his conſtitution by vice, and makes them inherit his diſeaſes and infirmities. Another endangers their happineſs in this world and the next, by neither giving nor procuring for them religious inſtruction. And all run the hazard of corrupting them by a bad example. On the contrary, Good Parents are moſt likely, by their honeſty and prudence, to leave their children ſome property. They are ſure at leaſt to breed them up to induſtry, and the knowledge of ſome way of maintenance. Their good character, and the good will of mankind towards them, generally obtain friends and protectors to their families: they to whom they have been kind in their day, are apt to ſhew kindneſs to their children after them. Living in "temperance, ſoberneſs, and chaſtity," they do not expoſe their health to the evil effects of debauchery; and therefore give

better conſtitutions to their children. Above all, they inſtruct them in true Religion: and lead them to the ſtudy and practice of it by their own example. They therefore leave to their children (if they will hear and follow them) an inheritance far better than eſtates or kingdoms; namely, the knowledge and performance of chriſtian duty, the bleſſing of God, and the hope of everlaſting happineſs. Theſe conſiderations ought to have great weight with all perſons who have children, or expect ever to have any. If they be religious and prudent, they may rejoice in the humble hope, that their virtues may, under the divine bleſſing, promote the goodneſs and happineſs of their children, and their children's children. If they be irreligious and imprudent, let them tremble to foreſee, how many of their children and poſterity may be ruined in this world and the next, by gathering the bitter fruits of their vices and follies, and by walking in their ſteps. What the Almighty ſaid to the negligent Prophet, "who did "not warn the wicked to turn from his "wicked way," he ſaith alſo to the vicious or careleſs father and mother; "thy child

" ſhall die in his iniquity, but his blood " will I require at thy hands."*

THESE commands are a laſting monument of the Weakneſs of Man; as they ſhew that ſo marvellous a folly as Idolatry hath ever entered into his heart. They call upon us to be thankful to GOD for giving to the People of Iſrael, and through them to other nations, a knowledge of Himſelf and the worſhip which he approves. They move us to praiſe him for the clearer diſcovery, made to us Chriſtians, of his perfections and our duty towards him. They incline us to receive with humility and obedience all the doctrines and laws, which he hath given us, for our inſtruction and guidance, in his Holy Word.

* Ezekiel iii. 18.

SERMON IV.

ON THE COMMANDMENTS---III.

I SAM. II. 30.

THEM THAT HONOUR ME I WILL HONOUR, AND THEY THAT DESPISE ME SHALL BE LIGHTLY ESTEEMED.

THE firſt and higheſt diſhonour we can offer to GOD, is to acknowledge or worſhip any falſe, or pretended, gods. The ſecond, is to acknowledge and worſhip GOD alone, but to worſhip him by an idol. The third, is to acknowledge GOD alone and worſhip him without an idol, but to addreſs ourſelves to him, or ſpeak of him, without Due Reverence.

The Third Commandment therefore is, "Thou ſhalt not take the name of the Lord "thy God in vain." To "take the name "of GOD" is to mention, or call upon, him by any name or title whatever, as GOD, JEHOVAH, the LORD, the ALMIGHTY. To take

his name "in vain" is to mention, or call upon, him on any occaſion, or in any manner, unſuitable to his nature, and to the love and fear which we owe to him.

Firſt, We "take his name in vain," if we ſwear falſely, affirming that to be true which we know to be falſe, or do not know to be true, either in a court of juſtice, or in common converſation. To utter a lye, and at the ſame time to call upon Almighty GOD to witneſs that we ſpeak the truth, and to puniſh us if we ſpeak a falſehood, is beyond imagination ſhocking and wicked. It is to ſpeak and act as if we diſbelieved the knowledge, and holineſs, and juſtice, of GOD, and defied his power.

Secondly, To ſwear at all in common converſation is "a taking of the name of GOD "in vain." It is to uſe his name to a vain, improper, and unworthy, purpoſe. It is to call upon his adorable Majeſty to bear witneſs to things common and trifling. It is a ſhameful want of reverence to the Maker and Governour of heaven and earth; in whom "we live, and move, and have our "being;"* on whom we depend for every

* Act xvii. 28.

thing that we have or can have; who ought never even to be thought of by us his creatures, without the loweſt humility and dutiful affection; much leſs to be called upon in the moſt careleſs and preſumptuous manner, in trifling buſineſs or converſation, and (as is the caſe too frequently) in drunkenneſs and other vicious engagements.

Thirdly, To uſe the name of God at all in common converſation, except in a grave or reverential manner, is "a taking of it in "vain." This ſin of ſwearing, or otherwiſe careleſsly uſing the name of God, in common converſation, began with Idolaters: men who were ſo fooliſh as to worſhip the ſun, or dead men, or images of wood or ſtone, could not (we may ſuppoſe) have any true reſpect for ſuch falſe and pretended gods, or any notion of the reverence which is due to God. It has been continued among the careleſs worſhipers of God; who "be-"lieve in God Almighty, the Maker of Hea-"ven and Earth," but forget his nature and their own, what he is, what they are, and what they are to him. It is frequently committed by the ill-inſtructed, thoughtleſs, or profligate, Diſciples of Chriſt; who either

have never learned the duties of their Religion, or for a time forget them, or have forſaken them. When we hear the name of GOD mentioned without reverence by perſons of low condition, ignorant probably of the greatneſs of the fault, and led on daily by bad example, we wiſh and endeavour to ſee them better informed and guided: but whenever it happens that men of education fall into an error ſo clearly inconſiſtent with all religion, explicitly condemned by the Holy Scriptures, diſcountenanced by the Laws of this Chriſtian Country, and by the decency of eſtabliſhed manners, we are equally diſguſted with their impiety, ſurprized at their inconſideration, and diſtreſſed at the difficulty of drawing them, without offence, to recollection and amendment. The ſureſt way to avoid or forſake a ſin of any kind, and this in particular, is to have God often in our thoughts; to conſider his infinite greatneſs in Power, and Wiſdom, and Juſtice, and Goodneſs, and Mercy, and in every quality which can command our Fear and our Love; which can fill us with thankfulneſs for his paſt favours, with hope of favours yet to come, with a deſire to pleaſe

him, and a dread to offend him. The more "we ſet GOD before us,"* the more worthily ſhall we think of him, and the more reverently ſhall we ſpeak of him. If we recollect that "he is in Heaven and we on Earth, our "words will be few:"† that is, if we conſider his perfections and his dealings towards us, and our weakneſs and unworthineſs, and our dependence upon him, our common ſenſe will inſtruct us to be ſerious and devout when we make mention of his name, and forbid us in any manner whatever "to take "it in vain."

Fourthly, To ſwear in a Court of Juſtice, or before a Magiſtrate, or in any other way appointed by the Laws, is not "a taking of "the name of God in vain." For, in theſe caſes, you uſe his holy name on a ſerious occaſion, and in a reverent manner. You devoutly call upon him to be the Witneſs and Judge of your trueneſs and ſincerity; and, by ſo doing, you "give him the honour due "unto his name;"‡ for you confeſs that he knoweth the ſecrets of your hearts, and that he is a rewarder of righteouſneſs and a puniſher of iniquity. Receive with reli-

* Pſal. xvi. 9. † Eccleſiaſtes v. 2. ‡ Pſal. xxix. 2.

gious awe, the oath which is adminiſtered to you; and give your anſwers to the queſtions propoſed to you, or to any declaration or promiſe which the Laws require, with great thoughtfulneſs and care.

"The Lord will not hold him guiltleſs "that taketh his name in vain:" that is, "he "will ſurely puniſh him." Puniſhment is due to every ſin; and will follow it, unleſs prevented by repentance and amendment. But GOD hath eſpecially declared his vengeance againſt the ſins forbidden in the Second and Third Commandments. The reaſon of his doing ſo may, poſſibly, be this; that theſe ſins, above all others, hinder our performance of every duty which we owe to him. Our duty to GOD is to believe in him, to reverence him, to worſhip him, and to obey him. Idolatry ſhews that we do not know, or do not conſider, his perfections: falſe ſwearing is a preſumptuous contempt of him: common ſwearing, and a careleſs mention of his name, are a groſs and ſhocking diſreſpect to him. All theſe ſins, therefore, are plainly inconſiſtent with true belief in him, and due reverence towards him; and

prevent our offering him a reaſonable worſhip, and an acceptable obedience.

"From children you have known the "Holy Scriptures;"* and are by them ſo well inſtructed in the perfections of GOD, and the worſhip which is due to him, that you are in no danger of committing Idolatry. You have ſuch a lively and continual ſenſe of his holineſs, his knowledge, and his juſtice, that you never can, with forethought and deſign, Swear Falſely. The ſame conſideration and reverence of his perfections, will, I truſt, preſerve you conſtantly from Common Swearing and a careleſs mention of his name. May ſo profane a practice never diſhonour your chriſtian education, lead you into other impieties, and endanger your ſalvation!

* 2 Timothy iii. 15.

SERMON V.

ON THE COMMANDMENTS---IV.

GEN. II. 3.

GOD BLESSED THE SEVENTH DAY, AND SANCTIFIED IT.

GOD hath enjoined us, in the Firſt Commandment, to acknowledge and worſhip him alone: in the Second, to worſhip him in a manner ſuitable to his nature: in the Third, to think and ſpeak of him with reverence. Theſe are duties of every ſeaſon. There is no day on which we are not bound to acknowledge him, and to worſhip him in a manner ſuitable to his nature, and agreeable to his commands. There is no hour or minute, in which we are allowed to think or ſpeak of him without reverence. But he hath appointed a particular portion of our time, in which we are eſpecially commanded to ſhew our reverence of him, and to offer him our worſhip.

"In the beginning," that is before this world was, "God created," or made out of nothing, "the heaven and the earth."* He faſhioned the earth, and all things which are upon it, or appertain unto it.† His almighty power might have done this in a moment, but he thought fit to do it in ſix days. On the ſeventh day, having performed this great work of his power, wiſdom, and goodneſs, he added no more to it; he left off; (as we ſpeak of ourſelves) he "reſted."‡ He ſaw that his reaſonable creature Man, whom he had placed on this earth to enjoy and govern it, would, on many accounts, need ſome fixed time of reſting from the labours of life. He was pleaſed, therefore, to mark out for this purpoſe the Seventh Day. "God bleſſed the ſeventh day and "ſanctified it," or made it holy, to Adam the firſt man, and, in him, to all men after him.

To "ſanctify" a day, or make it holy, ſignifies, to diſtinguiſh it from every other day, and ſet it apart to religious uſes. The ſeventh day is ſet apart to the uſes following.

* Gen. i. 1. † Gen. i. 2—31.

‡ Gen. ii. 2.

Firſt. The ſeventh day is appointed to be a day of Reſt. On this account it is called the Sabbath day: for the word ſabbath ſignifies reſt. Some day of reſt is neceſſary, to man, and to the brute creatures which aſſiſt him in his labours. Unceaſing toil deſtroys the health, and ſtrength, of every living creature. GOD, who "knoweth whereof we "are made, and remembereth that" the bodies of men and of beaſts are "but duſt,"* gave them, as ſoon as he created them, this Law of Mercy. Whoever diligently keeps it, will feel the good effects of his obedience, in the refreſhment of his body, as well as in the comfort of his mind. If he labour for his bread on the ſix days, the Reſt of the ſeventh will reſtore his ſtrength and ſpirits, and lengthen his life. If he be engaged through the week in the purſuit of wealth or pleaſure, he will benefit his conſtitution by the quiet and retirement of the ſabbath. In every ſituation, he will feel a ſolid ſatisfaction in dividing his time agreeably to the gracious deſign and command of his Creator.

* Pſal. ciii. 14.

Secondly. The ſeventh day is appointed to be a day of Worſhip. Prayer is a reaſonable offering of man to God, his creator, preſerver, and governour. Daily prayer is as neceſſary to the health of the Soul, as daily quiet and ſleep are to the health of the Body. As daily quiet and ſleep are not ſufficient to the health of the body without one ſpecial day of Reſt; ſo neither are our daily prayers ſufficient to the health of the ſoul without one ſpecial day of Worſhip. God, who in his goodneſs hath provided for the welfare of this periſhable body by appointing a ſeventh day of Reſt, hath, in his greater goodneſs, provided for the welfare of the everlaſting ſoul, by making the ſame day a day of Worſhip. Happy is he who applies it to this Second gracious purpoſe, for which his kind Creator hath "made it holy!"

Thirdly. The Seventh day is appointed to be a day of Religious Inſtruction and Meditation. God hath been pleaſed to ſend us into this world, to abide here for a ſeaſon: he will ſoon call us into another, there to remain for ever. Our happineſs in this world depends greatly upon our leading

a good life; our happineſs in the other will depend upon it entirely. In order to lead a good life, it is neceſſary to learn the truths and duties of religion. The greater part of mankind have not time ſufficient for this purpoſe in the ſix days of labour and buſineſs; they who have time ſufficient are apt to beſtow a large part of it upon amuſement; all therefore have great occaſion for the leiſure and opportunity afforded them for Religious Inſtruction, on the ſeventh day of reſt and worſhip. In order to lead a good life, it is alſo neceſſary to Meditate upon the truths and duties of religion. They who have learned them moſt perfectly, are in frequent danger of loſing the recollection of them; at leaſt, of not living agreeably to them: and the ſame worldly buſineſs and amuſements of the ſix days which prevent men from learning them, lead equally to their forgetting or neglecting them. Religious Meditation, therefore, is as neceſſary as Religious Inſtruction; and equally requires the leiſure and opportunity afforded on the ſeventh day of reſt and worſhip.

Among all the truths and duties of religion, there is one truth and one duty, which

we are eſpecially concerned to have ever preſent in our minds: the truth is, "that "GOD is the maker, preſerver, and gover- "nour, of all things;" the duty is, "that we, "and all his reaſonable creatures, do there- "fore look up to him with reverence for "the continuance of our being, and the "advancement of our happineſs, in all time "to come." This truth is the foundation of all religious knowledge; and this duty is the corner-ſtone of all religious practice. Now this truth, and this duty, are preſſed upon our remembrance, in a ſingular and ſtriking manner, by every returning ſabbath; GOD left a perpetual memorial of them, and a ſolemn warning, to us, and to all generations of men, when he "bleſſed and ſancti- "fied the ſeventh day, becauſe that in it "he had reſted from all his work, which "HE CREATED AND MADE." So wiſely and graciouſly was the ſabbath ordained to be a preſerver of true religion in all ages: and ſo deeply will the reſpect or diſreſpect ſhewn to it, affect the religious belief and behaviour of every perſon, family, and nation.

THERE is no doubt but religious men from Adam to Moſes obeyed this Law of

God concerning the ſabbath. The Children of Seth* and other righteous perſons, who received from their fathers the hiſtory of the creation, and worſhiped the almighty "maker of heaven and earth," and "called "themſelves by the name of the Lord,"† as vowing all duty and obedience to him, could not fail to keep holy the day, which He had bleſſed and ſanctified in remembrance of his power, and wiſdom, and goodneſs, diſplayed in the work which he had finiſhed on that day. When God called the Children of Iſrael, by the voice of Moſes, from the ſlavery and idolatry of Egypt, where the tyranny of their taſkmaſters allowed them no day of reſt, and continual labour and evil example had probably driven them from the obſervance of a day of worſhip, he was pleaſed, in a wonderful manner, to bring this Primitive Law to their remembrance. For when in the wilderneſs he fed them, by a miracle, with manna, or bread, from heaven, he ſuffered none to fall on the ſeventh day: and the bread which fell on the ſixth day was ſweet upon the ſeventh, but that which fell on any other day was not eat-

* See Gen. v.

† Gen. iv. 26. margin.

able on the morrow.* Thus did GOD fix in the minds of his People (chosen by him to preserve the knowledge of his perfections and his laws, for the benefit of all nations in all ages,) this commandment given at the creation, "to sanctify the seventh day." When, afterwards, he taught them from mount Sinai, how they ought to believe in him, to reverence him, to worship him, and to obey him, one of the heavenly lessons was, "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it "holy." They accordingly kept holy every seventh day; reckoning from the day on which the manna fell not, and probably also from the day on which their deliverance from Egypt was completed by the drowning of Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea.† When our Blessed Lord had died to redeem, or deliver, us from death and misery, he rose from the dead on the day after the Jewish sabbath, or the first day of the week. On this day he "rested from," or finished, his work of Redemption, as GOD on the seventh day "rested from" his work of Creation. On this day, therefore, the Apostles and their Disciples assembled for Divine Worship,‡

* Exod. xvi. 11—30. † See Deut. v. 15.
‡ Acts xx. 7. 1 Corinth. xvi. 2.

and called it the Lord's Day.* Chriſtians have followed their example in every age. They ſanctify every ſeventh day; not that day of the ſeven which probably completed the deliverance of the People of Iſrael, but the day which finiſhed the Redemption of all mankind.

Thus did religious men, from the beginning of the world to the time of Moſes, ſanctify every ſeventh day, in obedience to the commandment given at the creation, in remembrance of that mighty work, and in reverence of the almighty Creator. In like manner did the People of Iſrael, from the time of Moſes to the coming of Chriſt, ſanctify every ſeventh day, for the ſame reaſons: they ſanctified it for Other reaſons alſo, namely, in obedience to a new commandment given them in the wilderneſs; in remembrance of a new work of God, his delivering them from Egypt and giving them reſt from ſlavery;† and as a ſpecial acknowledgment that they worſhiped (not the pretended gods of the Egyptians and other idolaters, but) God, whom their fathers had worſhiped, from Adam, and Seth,

* Revelation i. 10. † Deut. v. 15.

and Noah, and Abraham, to their own days, JEHOVAH, the maker of heaven and earth.* We, the diſciples of Chriſt, ſanctify every ſeventh day, as did religious men, and the People of Iſrael in particular, before his coming, in obedience to the commandment given at the creation, in remembrance of that mighty work, and in reverence of the Creator. We ſanctify it for Other reaſons alſo, namely, in remembrance of our redemption from death and miſery, (our Second Creation to everlaſting life and happineſs,) and in grateful reverence of our Redeemer: and we do it therefore on the day on which he finiſhed this redemption by riſing from the dead. We ſanctify this day in a manner agreeable to the reaſon and deſign of the Primitive Commandment, to the rules of Chriſtian religion, and to the practice of the Apoſtles and all Chriſtians after them; making it a day of REST, of WORSHIP, and of RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION and MEDITATION.

* Exod. xxxi. 13, 16, 17.

SERMON VI.

ON THE COMMANDMENTS---IV.

GEN. II. 3.

GOD BLESSED THE SEVENTH DAY, AND SANCTIFIED IT.

YOUR duty on this holy day is, as follows.

Firſt, To Reſt: to put an entire ſtop to the employments of your ſeveral ſituations and callings. Theſe employments are various: ſome for maintenance; ſome for wealth; ſome for amuſement: ſome exerciſe the mind only, others the mind and the body. There is the buſineſs of the gardener, the huſbandman, the handicraftſman, the ſhopkeeper, the merchant, the practitioner in law. There is the making of bargains, and the keeping of accounts. There is, moreover, the entertainment of the chace and of the card-table, of dancing, and of muſic. There is journeying from place to place on

buſineſs or pleaſure. All theſe employments are, on the face of them, inconſiſtent with the ends and duties of a Sabbath, or Lord's Day. They take away, more or leſs, from Reſt. They generally prevent attendance on Public Worſhip and Inſtruction; they allow little time to Private Worſhip and Inſtruction; and leſs to Religious Meditation. They keep the mind tied down, on Sunday, as on other days, to the things of this world, and to the intereſts and amuſements of this paſſing life; not permitting her, even for a few hours of one day in ſeven, to look forward to the country whither ſhe is haſtening, and to the everlaſting happineſs or miſery which awaits her there. They leave you little or no time to learn, to recollect, or to conſider, the truths and duties of religion, to compare your belief and practice with the word of God, to implore his Pardon for your faults, and his Grace to amend them.

There are a few employments allowable on the Lord's Day: ſome, becauſe they are neceſſary to the reaſonable comfort of life, and cannot always be conveniently omitted; as the dreſſing of food for a family, and the

giving of provender to cattle: others, becauſe they are humane and charitable, and cannot be delayed; as nurſing the ſick, and ordering them medicine, and preparing in particular caſes for the burial of the dead. There are alſo amuſements allowable on the Lord's Day, becauſe they are conſiſtent with all the purpoſes of it, and moreover conduce to one of them, which is to rejoice in the benefits of Creation and Redemption, as on this day, beſtowed upon us. For Sunday, as it is principally a Holy Day of Reſt, Worſhip, Inſtruction, and Meditation, ſo is it alſo a Feſtival, or day of thankful and temperate enjoyment of the good things of this life which GOD hath given us. But you are to take care that the Chief Deſigns of the day be not forgotten or neglected. Your amuſement muſt not hinder your Reſt: it muſt not be within the hours of Public Worſhip and Inſtruction: it muſt leave time for Private Worſhip, Inſtruction, and Meditation: and you are SPECIALLY TO BEWARE that it do not rob your Children or Servants of Any One of theſe benefits. Your amuſements ought alſo to be ſuch only as are allowed on Sundays by the laws and cuſtoms

of our country; for otherwiſe, although they may be, even on this day, innocent in themſelves, they are wrong, as acts of diſobedience to our Governours; and hurtful, as leading your family, or neighbours, to other amuſements which are not innocent, and teaching them by degrees to make little or no diſtinction between one day and another.

Your Second duty on this holy day is Worſhip: that is, an addition to your daily private prayers, and attendance on the public ſervice of the Church. In all ages and countries men have offered up their prayers, not only in their own houſes, by themſelves and with their families, but alſo in public aſſemblies. The Jews, under the law of Moſes, worſhiped God in the Tabernacle and the Temple, and alſo in houſes of public worſhip which they called Synagogues, that is, Places of Aſſembling. Our Bleſſed Lord, when upon earth, prayed alone, with his diſciples, in the Synagogues, and in the Temple. The Apoſtles and the firſt Chriſtians aſſembled for divine worſhip in chambers of private houſes, obtained occaſionally, or appointed conſtantly, for that purpoſe: ſoon afterwards, the Chriſtians had

for this uſe, which we call Churches, or Houſes of the Lord. In theſe chambers and churches they aſſembled every day; which is, among us, the cuſtom in Cathedral Churches and in many others: but chiefly and univerſally we aſſemble on the Lord's Day. On this day, therefore, it is your duty to attend the Service of the Church once at the leaſt, twice if it be in your power, as it generally will be. Nothing but Sickneſs, or the real, well-grounded, fear of it, will excuſe any of you; except one in a family, or ſometimes (it may happen) more, who are hindered by a work of Neceſſity or Charity, ſuch as I have mentioned above: but works of neceſſity or charity ought to be ſo contrived and divided by the Maſter and Miſtreſs of a family, that every member of it may, in his turn and order, have conſtant opportunity to attend the public worſhip.

Your Third duty on this day is to obtain Religious inſtruction. This you may do, in an ample manner, by attending the Service of the Church. All chriſtian worſhip, and eſpecially public worſhip, is a ſerious recollection, and a ſolemn acknowledgment, of the perfections of God, of his power and goodneſs, his preſence every where, his watchful care of us,

our dependence upon him, our truſt in him, our deſire to pleaſe him. It is, moreover, a thankful remembrance of the kindneſs of GOD, in ſending his SON to be our Redeemer and Lawgiver, and his SPIRIT to be our Guide and Helper; it is a declaration of our faith in Jeſus Chriſt, and our reſolution to obey his laws; of our reliance on the Holy Spirit, and our wiſh to be led and quickened by him in the path of duty. It is, like the Sabbath, an unceaſing leſſon of true religion. The ſervice of our Church, in particular, is ſo wiſely ordered, as to bring before our view continually the truths and duties of chriſtianity. The Pſalms and Leſſons, with the Epiſtles and Goſpels, all taken from the holy ſcriptures, inſtruct us in the nature of GOD and his dominion over all things. They recount his juſt and gracious dealings with mankind, from their creation and fall in the Firſt Man, to their redemption in Jeſus Chriſt. They ſet forth the Benefits of this redemption, namely, pardon of ſin, deliverance from death, happineſs everlaſting. They publiſh the Conditions on which we may receive theſe benefits, namely, faith and obedience. The ſeveral articles of our faith are briefly recited in the Creeds: the particular

parts of our obedience are ſtated in the Commandments. The Prayers teach you, in what manner you are to addreſs Almighty GOD, what things you are to aſk of him, and in whoſe name you are to offer him your petitions. The Communion Service diſplays in a lively and affecting manner, the loving-kindneſs of our LORD and SAVIOUR, the bleſſings which we may receive by his merits and mediation, and our high obligation to reverence and obey him. The Sermons explain all theſe chriſtian doctrines and virtues; and invite you, by every argument of duty and hope of happineſs, to continue in the belief and practice of them to the end of your lives.

This way of receiving religious inſtruction on the Lord's Day is open to you all. Moſt of you have alſo further means of obtaining it. In the pooreſt houſes there is uſually one, or more, who are able to read. Theſe may read the Bible, and other religious books, to the reſt of the family. Subſtantial farmers and tradeſmen may read, with more eaſe and advantage, to their children and ſervants. The children of wealthy perſons, bleſt with a higher education in the houſes of their fathers and in ſchools of learning, may gain larger inſtruc-

tion and admonition from choſen ſermons and diſcourſes, on the doctrines, precepts, and promiſes, of the Goſpel, and on the duties and decencies of civil and domeſtic life. The peruſal of theſe valuable works will improve their virtue and happineſs in every age and ſituation. It will form the opinions and manners of their youth; it will confirm their faith in manhood; and enliven their hope in declining years. It will prevent ſolitude from being irkſome, and company from being dangerous. It will heighten the enjoyments, and ſooth the ſufferings, of life.* It will prepare them for the approaches of death; enabling them to meet it with compoſure and cheerfulneſs, grounded on a firm expectation of a happy immortality. A few hours ſo employed in every week would, I am perſuaded, ſave many a young perſon from early imprudencies and immoralities, which, by embarraſſing his fortune and weakening his religious principles, abate his preſent happineſs, and darken his proſpects in a life to come.

Your Fourth duty on this day is Meditation; that is, a ſerious recollection and conſideration

* The young ſcholar, for whom this advice is principally deſigned, may perhaps recollect Cicero—

Cicero for Archias, Sect. 7, latter end.

of the religious truths and duties, in which you have been happily inſtructed from your childhood to the preſent hour. On every day, and on this day eſpecially, you will call to remembrance the perfections of GOD, his power and wiſdom, his holineſs and juſtice, his goodneſs to all his creatures, his mercy to ſinful man, his gracious offers to him of pardon and happineſs. You will think of the love, and fear, and obedience, which you owe to HIM, ſo great, and good, and wonderful, as he is; who made you, who preſerves you, who governs you; who will reward or puniſh you everlaſtingly according to your behaviour. Whatever you have done to pleaſe him, reſolve to continue doing it: whatever you have done to diſpleaſe him, reſolve to do it no more. Think of every duty which, by his command, you owe to other men; that is, to your father and mother, your brothers and ſiſters, your maſter and miſtreſs, or ſervant; to the King and all who are in authority under him; to your ſpiritual teacher, your neighbour, all with whom you have any acquaintance or buſineſs, or to whom you can do any good. Think of the duty which, by his command, you owe to

yourſelf; namely, to preſerve your body in health and vigour by temperance, ſoberneſs, and chaſtity; neither eating or drinking more than is good for nouriſhment, refreſhment, and cheerfulneſs; nor keeping company, man with woman, in any other way than in the holy and honourable ſtate of matrimony; to preſerve your mind in evenneſs and quietneſs, free from prejudice and paſſion, willing to be guided by the word of GOD and by his Holy Spirit, and ready to learn and perform his will. Think of the ſhortneſs of life, the certainty of death, the day of judgment, the happineſs of the good, the miſery of the wicked.

Such reflections as theſe, few though they be, and ſhort; yet how true! how important! how efficacious! will make every Lord's Day "a day of ſalvation" to you; that is, a day which will ſo fix your opinions, and guide your actions, through the remainder of the week, as to keep you perpetually in the path of duty, and lead you to eternal ſalvation.

THESE are the Duties and Benefits of a Chriſtian Sabbath: happy will it be for you

all, if you duly conſider them. They claim the attention of every thinking perſon, at every age, and in every condition.

Young men and women, "remember now "your Creator in the days of your youth."* Remember him on this day eſpecially, which he hath ſet apart for your grateful recollection of all the bleſſings which he hath beſtowed upon you. On this day your Creator, having made your Firſt Parents in his own image, and given them dominion over all the earth, reſted from all his work which he had made. On this day your Redeemer, having died to ſave you, roſe again from the grave. On this day the Holy Spirit came down upon the Apoſtles, enabling them to preach the Goſpel to all nations, and hand it down to all ſucceeding generations, to your forefathers, to you, and to your children after you. On this day you are invited to ſecure to yourſelves the enjoyment of all theſe bleſſings, by an early piety and a life of holineſs.

You who are in middle age, are ripened in underſtanding, and improved in knowledge. You have experienced ſuch happineſs as this world affords. You have learnt how much greater happineſs we may expect

* Eccleſiaſtes xii. 1.

in another. The happineſs of this world is the chief end and object of your ſix days labour. The happineſs of another is the chief end and object of your Sunday's devotion. Judge, therefore, to which of theſe you will give more of your time and thoughts, than you have given hitherto. Will you increaſe your labour and anxiety for "the meat "which periſheth, or for the meat which "endureth unto everlaſting life?"*

You who are old, conſider how ſhort a time remains to you, either for the labours and amuſements of this preſent life, or for the duties which are to prepare you for a life to come. Your day is far ſpent: your night is at hand: "the ſhadows of the even-"ing are already ſtretched out."† Every hour weakens your intereſt in a world which is about to vaniſh from your ſight. You will not therefore beſtow upon it thoſe Sacred Moments, which you have long ſince devoted to one wherein you will abide for ever. You will rather wiſh to "keep "holy" the remainder of your life: preparing yourſelves for that eternal ſabbath,‡ that never-ending day of Reſt, and Worſhip,

* John vi. 27. † Jeremiah vi. 4. ‡ See Heb. iv. 1—11.

and Rejoicing, which, as you humbly truſt, will ſoon open to your view.

You who are poor, and labour for your living ſix days continually, be thankful to GOD for the Reſt which he gives you on the ſeventh. Do not loſe the benefit of his gracious ordinance by working or travelling on his holy ſabbath. On the week days you have little time to learn your duty in this world, and your expectations in a world to come. Do not throw away the happy opportunity of gaining this knowledge on Sundays in the Houſe of God. There, you may hear what Jeſus Chriſt hath done for you, what he commandeth you to do, and what he hath promiſed you. There, you may become acquainted with the whole will of GOD, and his gracious deſigns concerning you. Afterwards, you may read, at home, in your Bible and Prayer Book and other Good Books, the ſame wholeſome doctrines, and the ſame exhortations to godlineſs. I truſt, that, on Every day, you think of God, his mercies in Chriſt Jeſus, the aſſiſtance of his Spirit, death, judgment, heaven, and hell. But on this day you have more leiſure for theſe Holy Thoughts; and what you hear at Church, and what you read or hear at home, calls them

more into your mind. There let them dwell, until you ſay your evening prayer, and lie down to reſt. They will make you good and happy for the remainder of the week.

You, who are daily employed in your Farm, in your Merchandiſe abroad, or in your Shops and Counting-houſes at home, embrace with thankfulneſs the comforts and benefits offered to you on the Lord's Day. You have nearly the ſame reaſon with the Labouring Poor, to rejoice in the eaſe and quiet of a Sabbath. You have the ſame duties to perform, the ſame inſtruction to ſeek, and the ſame meditations to purſue. You have one duty more than they, which is, to lead your ſervants and labourers to the houſe of prayer, to ſee that no buſineſs of yours, without great neceſſity, ever keep them from it; to encourage them, as far as in you lies, to inſtruct themſelves, or be by you inſtructed, at home.

You, who have inherited a fortune from the proſperous activity of your anceſtors, or acquired one by your own; who, by the favour of Divine Providence, are relieved from one burthen of human nature, and know not what it is to toil on any day; you will not, on this day, lightly ſuffer your intereſt or your amuſe-

ment to interrupt that Sacred Reſt, that univerſal gift of GOD, which, how unimportant ſoever it may be to you, is neceſſary to the health and life of your labouring brethren. You will not be ſo wanting in Piety and Charity, as to ſet before them the dangerous example of deſerting the Public Worſhip. You will invite them by your preſence and attention to receive the Public Inſtruction, which is indiſpenſably requiſite for them, and not ſuperfluous to you: for no one, inferior to an Apoſtle, can fail to improve in knowledge and goodneſs from an habitual acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures; and, I believe, you will very rarely hear a Sermon, how imperfect ſoever in compoſition or delivery, which may not ſuggeſt, or recall, to your mind ſome truth or counſel, worthy the notice of a wiſe man. You will have particular regard to the ſervants of your houſehold; whoſe leiſure and opportunity for religious duties depend upon your appointments: and you will kindly defer to a more convenient ſeaſon the viſit or amuſement, which decidedly cuts them off from public or private worſhip, inſtruction, or meditation. In the diſpoſal, therefore, of your time on this day, you will have three points to conſi-

der; namely, your own perſonal duty, the certain effect of your commands upon ſome, and the probable influence of your example upon many. You may perhaps be inclined to make a diſtant viſit, or take a journey of buſineſs or pleaſure. The roads, which, by the civil inſtitutions of your country, are ſhut to carriages of huſbandry and commerce, lie open to yours. The convenience ariſing to you from this ſuſpenſion of uſeful labour, may even tempt you to violate the ſpirit, and obſtruct the end, of the laws which enjoin it. Your virtuous principles, indeed, may move you to qualify your neglect of public prayer by enlarging your private devotions: your knowledge and reading may preclude the neceſſity of conſtant public inſtruction: you may, poſſibly, attend divine ſervice at ſome early Chapel. But what does this ſubſtitution of private for public duty, avail the ſervant who prepares your carriage and horſes, or who attends you on the road? How does it affect the citizen, or the peaſant, who ſees you haſtening through the ſtreets of the metropolis, or through the towns and villages, on His day of reſt, and perhaps at his hour of prayer? What will be his reaſoning on this conduct of his ſuperior in rank and

knowledge? Will not your example abate his veneration for the day? for the worſhip, which he is called to offer? for the inſtruction, which he is invited to receive? for the religion, whereof the ſeparation of this day is a principal ordinance and a powerful inſtrument? for the Supreme Being, who is the author and object of this religion? for his attributes, his laws, his promiſes, and his threatenings? If your ſingle, occaſional, example, may have this fatal tendency, what evils may follow, indeed what evils have followed, from the habitual example of many? I hope you will always feel the truth of this repreſentation. The conduct is not right in itſelf, or conducive to your own moral improvement: the example is more deeply pernicious than (I am perſuaded) you are aware, and more extenſively ſo than you can calculate. One error of the kind will probably do more harm, than many reaſonable admonitions, given by yourſelf or your Miniſter, will do good.

MAY we all, with one mind, "remember "the ſabbath day to keep it Holy;"* diſtin-

* Exodus xx. 8.

guiſhed and honoured above other days by Reſt, by Prayer, by Inſtruction, by Meditation, by a cheerful enjoyment of the good things which God hath given us in this world, and by an enlivened hope of his favour and bounty in a world to come: beſeeching him that he will, on this and every day, pardon our ſins, and accept our imperfect obedience, through Jeſus Chriſt.

SERMON VII.

ON THE COMMANDMENTS---V.

EPHESIANS VI. 2.

HONOUR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER.

EVERY thing which GOD commands us to do, is a duty: we owe it to Him, our Creator, Preſerver, and Governour. Some duties are to be performed to GOD alone, as worſhip for example, and are therefore called duties towards GOD. Other duties are to be performed to Man, as juſtice for inſtance, and are therefore called duties towards Man: and, although they are due to all men, yet as they commonly concern thoſe who are near or known to us, they are called duties towards our Neighbour. The four firſt commandments contain duties towards GOD; the ſix laſt, duties towards our Neighbour: and, as the ten commandments were at firſt written, or engraven, on two tables of ſtone,* (al-

* Exod. xxxi. 18.

though it is not known how many were written on one table, and how many on the other,) the duties towards God are ſometimes called the duties of the Firſt table, and the duties towards our Neighbour, the duties of the Second table.

The Fifth Commandment is, "Honour "thy father and thy mother."

The firſt relation which any perſon can have to another is to his father and mother; and therefore a proper behaviour to them is his firſt duty towards his neighbour: and this duty begins as ſoon as he can diſtinguiſh right from wrong. The duty of a child to his parents is as follows.

Firſt. To reverence them, that is, to love and fear them. The love of a child is due to his parents, as the perſons who brought him into life, nurſed him in childhood, and maintained him in youth. The mother has borne on his account many pains, and labours, and watchings: and the father has ſupported him, if rich or proſperous, with kindneſs and attention; if poor or unfortunate, with labour and anxiety. The natural affection of Every parent to his child demands a return of natural affection. The tender and active

love of a Good parent to his child, commands a ſuitable return of the warmeſt love, heightened by gratitude. The fear which is due from a child to his parents, is an awful dread of diſobeying or offending them. This fear naturally grows out of his love and gratitude: it is due to them as the perſons to whom, under GOD, he owes his being, and whom GOD has appointed to be his guides and governours.

Secondly. This reverence due from a child to his parents is to be expreſſed, in his common behaviour, by all uſual tokens of reverence; and in his actions, by obedience to their commands. The authority of the parents over the child is univerſal and abſolute during the ſtate of infancy and youth: it ought to have conſiderable weight when he is at years of diſcretion, eſpecially if he continue under their roof: and after he is ſettled abroad in the world, the opinion and advice of his parents ſhould be heard with great attention; and have a proper influence, according to ſituation and circumſtance, upon his conduct. But this authority, as every other, is ſubject to this limitation; that if a parent ſhould be ſo wicked as to command or adviſe any thing ſinful, he is not to be

obeyed or followed: no parent or friend, no command or advice, can juſtify an evil action.

Thirdly. It is the duty of a child to make the life of his parents as comfortable and happy in every particular as he can; by every mark of reverent affection; by attending them in ſickneſs and infirmity; by cheering and amuſing them with his company, ſo long as he lives with them, or near them; when he is ſeparated from them, by viſiting them as often as diſtance and other circumſtances will permit. If parents be in narrow circumſtances, the child is bound by every obligation to aſſiſt them to the utmoſt of his power. This is a debt not of natural affection only, but of gratitude and juſtice. For who was it that ſupported the child in the helpleſs ſtate of infancy, without the uſe of limbs or underſtanding? when, ſo far from procuring bread to eat, he could not put it into his own mouth? who, but the fond and anxious parent, that is now ſinking under age, and ſickneſs, and poverty, is approaching to a ſecond childhood, and wants nearly the ſame aſſiſtance? Though the parent ſhould not be reduced to this extreme infirmity of body, or failure of neceſſaries or conveniences, yet old age has always its pecu-

liar evils. It is itſelf a ſickneſs; and therefore needs cordials and comforts. If the maintenance of the parent depend upon his induſtry, as years come on, labour is more painful, and gains leſs wages: every aſſiſtance, therefore, given by the dutiful child who is in health and vigour, to the parent every year growing more ſickly and feeble, is doubly acceptable; it ſupports him in his greateſt need, and ſooths him as a mark of his child's affection. If the aged parent have every accommodation of a competent or affluent fortune, the company and attention of his children is a relief and entertainment which no wealth can purchaſe; it is the only token of their duty which they can offer, and it is the laſt pleaſure of his life which he will reliſh.

Theſe ſeveral duties of a child to his parents, ariſing from his relation and obligations to them, are enjoined in this commandment under the word, "Honour."

As the Ten Commandments are a ſhort and general account of our duties to GOD and Man, every commandment is underſtood to contain, not only the duty which it enjoins in plain

words, but alſo every other duty which is connected with it. Thus, when the Fifth Commandment ſays to the Child, "honour thy "father and thy mother," it is ſuppoſed in reaſon to ſay to the Father and the Mother, "behave to your child in ſuch a way as to "deſerve that honour:" (although the child owes the honour, whether the parent deſerve it or not.) In like manner, as it enjoins you to honour your father and your mother, ſo does it call upon you to honour your Grandfather and your Grandmother, your Uncle alſo and your Aunt, and your Guardian. Further, as it is your duty to honour thoſe who are above you in your own family, ſo ought you, in ſuitable degree and manner, to honour thoſe who are above you out of it; as your Maſters, Teachers, and Governours.

The duty of parents to their children, is as follows.

Firſt. To nouriſh and ſupport them. Nature moves every living creature to take care of its offspring: and therefore a father or a mother who neglects to do ſo, is uſually called, not only unjuſt and cruel, but Unnatural. This care ought to be anxious, diligent, and continual; ſeeking, and uſing, the beſt means

of bringing up the child in ſafety, health, and ſtrength. Many children are loſt through the careleſſneſs and blameable ignorance of the mother, and through the ſcanty maintenance provided by an idle father. For parents thus to neglect a helpleſs infant whom they have brought into the world, inheriting their infirmities, and looking up to them for nouriſhment and protection, how heinous a crime is this! how hateful in the ſight of man! how deſerving of puniſhment in the ſight of GOD!

The Second duty of parents to their children, is to breed them up in a manner ſuitable to their condition and reaſonable expectations in the world. If the child be to earn his living by day-labour, handicraft, huſbandry, or trade, he ſhould be early accuſtomed to the induſtry, and furniſhed with the knowledge, neceſſary to each of theſe employments. If he be deſigned for any higher calling or ſituation, his education ought to be carefully ſuited to it. The neglect of this duty produces conſequences fatal to virtue and happineſs in every rank of life. It brings the child of the poor man to want and wickedneſs, and often to an untimely end. It leads the child of the man of moderate fortunes into a ſitua-

tion unhappy and dangerous, a life without employment, and habits of expence without an income. It leaves the child of the rich man, without mental ability to perform the duties of his place, and without reſources to amuſe his leiſure. When the labourer or the tradeſman gives to the alehouſe or tavern, or the wife of either to her goſſipings, the time and money which they owe to the bringing up of their children, they little think of the beggary and bankruptcy, which they are preparing for themſelves and their family. When the gentleman detains his ſon from ſchool, to gratify his own weak indulgence, or to entertain his vacant hours; to quicken and confirm a natural propenſity, ſufficiently powerful, to the ſports of the field and the turf;* to cloy the child with the amuſements of youth, and the boy with the diverſions of manhood, and ſo leave the man without an untaſted luxury, to lament, with the aged, that "there is no-"thing new under the ſun;" he does not maturely conſider, whether a perſon ſo trained is likely to raiſe, improve, or enjoy, a fortune, or to fill any ſtation whatever with happineſs, uſefulneſs, or honour.

* Hor. Art. Poet. 161.

The Third, and principal, duty of parents to their children, is to fix in their minds the love and fear of GOD, and to teach them the truths and duties of Chriſtian Religion. No thinking parent can neglect this duty without horror; for he hazards the happineſs of his child, not only in this ſhort uncertain life, but in a life which will endure for ever. The praiſe which the Almighty gave to Abraham is never to be forgotten. "I know him that "he will command his children and his houſe-"hold after him; and they ſhall keep the way "of the Lord, to do juſtice and judgment."* Imitate his honoured example. Teach your children "the way of the Lord," the things which they are to believe concerning him, and to do to pleaſe him. Tell them who it is that made them, and preſerves them; that has the ſovereign government and diſpoſal of them, now, and to all eternity. Speak to them of his power and juſtice, his goodneſs and mercy. Inform them that he "knoweth their down-"ſitting and their upriſing; he underſtandeth "all their thoughts; he is about their bed, and "about their path, and ſpieth out all their "ways."† Acquaint them that he hath ſent

* Gen. xviii. 19. † Pſalm cxxxix. 3.

his ſon Jeſus Chriſt our Lord to ſave us from our ſins, and to teach us our duty; that he giveth us his Spirit to guide us, and to make us holy. Aſſure them that if they keep his commandments they will be wiſe and happy; that if they neglect them, they will be fooliſh and miſerable. Accuſtom them to pray to him every morning and evening. Bring them conſtantly to Church, to offer up their prayers with the congregation, and to be improved in Chriſtian knowledge and piety. Theſe things "ſhalt thou teach diligently unto thy children: "thou ſhalt talk of them" continually; "when "thou ſitteſt in thine houſe, and when thou "walkeſt by the way, and when thou lieſt "down, and when thou riſeſt up."*

The duty of ſervants and maſters is as follows. By a ſervant I mean, not only a houſehold ſervant, but alſo a workman, that is, a perſon who hires out his ſkill and labour to another, but does not live in his family. And when I mention a manſervant or a workman, I intend equally a maidſervant or a workwoman. In like manner, when I ſpeak of a maſter, I mean alſo a miſtreſs.

The Firſt duty of a ſervant is honeſty. Ho-

* Deut. vi. 7.

neſty is the duty of all to all: but I mention it in this caſe of ſervants particularly, becauſe their ſituation affords them great opportunities of diſhoneſty, and highly increaſes the guilt of it. A diſhoneſt houſehold ſervant, or workman, ſhamefully abuſes the truſt which is placed in him; injures the perſon who ſupplies him with all the neceſſaries of life; occaſions general ſuſpicion and diſtruſt in the family and neighbourhood; and, as far as in him lies, makes it impoſſible that the buſineſs of the world ſhould go on proſperouſly or peaceably.

The Second duty of a ſervant is induſtry and activity. He ought to enter into the concerns of his maſter, and forward his intereſt with the ſame anxiety and diligence as he would his own. This, in truth, is a branch of his honeſty; for it is the condition of his hiring, and the terms of his receiving his wages. He has ſold his labour and knowledge to his maſter for a certain time; a year, for example, as a houſehold ſervant; or a month, as a harveſt man; or ſo many hours in a day, as a carpenter or labourer. Now if he leave his work, or do it careleſsly, for any part of the time agreed, he defrauds his maſter as much

as if he took out of his pocket the amount of his wages: nay, he injures him ſtill more, in the interruption of his buſineſs, and the waſting of his goods. The farming ſervant, for example, who neglects to tend or feed the herd or the flock, or miſmanages the fields in ſeed time or harveſt, is not a better friend to his maſter, than he who ſteals from him a ſheep, or a ſack of wheat. The houſehold ſervant who waſtes or gives away his proviſions, is not more juſt to him, than a ſtranger who takes away a joint of meat, or a loaf of bread. The Joiner, or Maſon, who hangs idling over his work, or executes it ill, or leaves it unfiniſhed, does not deal more kindly by his employer, than one who robs him of a piece of furniture, or makes a breach in his garden wall. How can any of theſe ſervants receive the uſual recompenſe of their labours without ſhame and remorſe? How can the houſehold ſervant ſit down with comfort at the table of his injured maſter? How can he reliſh the milk of his kine, the bread of his granary, or the meat of his flock? How can the workman accept his money in full tale at the end of the week? Above all, how can either of them lie down in peace after the unrighteouſ-

neſs of the day, and hope for the favour and protection of his Heavenly Maſter, who ſeeth all "the hidden things of diſhoneſty,"* and will recompenſe every man according to his work?

The Third duty of a ſervant is to do his work at all times, in every particular, with cheerfulneſs and good humour; behaving towards his maſter with a reſpect and ſubmiſſion, due to one who by the order of Providence, and his own agreement, is placed above him; "not anſwering again;"† ready to execute all his juſt commands; and deſirous to give him all poſſible ſatisfaction. There is no country wherein ſervants enjoy more freedom, plenty, and kindneſs, than they do in England; there are very few countries where they enjoy ſo much. Here, it is always in their power, if they be reaſonable and frugal, to be happy in their ſervices, and to lay up ſomething for a houſe of their own. They therefore lie under ſpecial obligations to "ſhew all good fidelity "to their maſters, and to pleaſe them well in "all things."†

The duty of a maſter to his ſervants, is as follows.

* 2 Corinth. iv. 2. † Titus ii. 9.

Firſt. Honeſty, in paying them punctually and fully the price of their attendance and labour. As the poverty of the workman, or his place of abode, may ſometimes make him ſo dependent upon his employer, that the employer can in a manner fix his own price, it is his eſpecial duty to ſet it fairly and generouſly: in ſuch a caſe to agree for too low a price, is juſt the ſame diſhoneſty, as it would be in another not to pay the whole price agreed: it is, moreover, that aggravated kind of diſhoneſty, which we call oppreſſion, or the taking of an advantage of the poverty and helpleſſneſs of another. It is, further, the duty of the employer to pay his workman in money, and not in goods, wheat for example, unleſs the workman ſo agree or deſire: (if he ſo deſire, it is reaſonable to afford him that convenience) for he ought to have the choice of his market, and the beſt commodity for his price. God threatens ſevere judgments upon thoſe who "oppreſs the hireling in his wages,"* "and give him not for his work."† "The wa-"ges of him that is hired ſhall not abide with "thee all night until the morning."‡ "Be-"hold the hire of the labourers who have

* Malachi iii. 5. † Jeremiah xxii. 13. ‡ Leviticus xix. 13.

" reaped down your fields, which is of you
" kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries
" of them who have reaped are entered into
" the ears of the LORD of Sabaoth."*

The Second duty of a maſter to his ſervants, is civil and kind behaviour in word and deed. He will make their attendance and labour as eaſy and agreeable to them as may be. He will conſider and ſpare them when they are ſickly and infirm; and will be anxious to ſee them ſupplied with all means of comfort and recovery.

The Third duty of a maſter to his ſervants, and to his houſehold ſervants eſpecially, is to inſtruct them, or ſee that they be inſtructed, in Chriſtian Religion; and to uſe all the influence of his advice, example, and authority, to guide them in the paths of virtue. A maſter owes this duty more particularly to ſuch of his ſervants as come young into his family. He ſtands to them almoſt in the place of their parents, who have entruſted them to his counſel and protection. He has great and happy opportunities of promoting the temporal and eternal welfare of all his ſervants. His example is every hour before their eyes. They fear him

* James v. 4.

as their Maſter, and (if they are grateful) they love him as their friend. He will inſtruct and adviſe them from time to time. He will ſet the Holy Scriptures before them; and put ſhort and uſeful books into their hands. He will meet them daily at Family prayer: he will read to them at appointed ſeaſons: and bring them conſtantly to Church. In a houſe ſo ordered, they will grow wiſer, and better, and conſequently more happy, from day to day. They will have the higheſt reaſon to bleſs GOD for theſe advantages: and if they do not improve under them, their fault will be great, and their condemnation heavy.

SERMON VIII.

ON THE COMMANDMENTS---V.

EPHESIANS VI. 2.

HONOUR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER.

I HAVE ſpoken of the "Honour" due from children to parents, and from ſervants to maſters. I have alſo explained the duty of parents to their children, and of maſters to their ſervants. I come now to treat of Teachers and Governours; their office, and the honour due to them.

There are two kinds of Teachers. Firſt. The Miniſter of your pariſh: whoſe office it is to read the word of GOD; to diſpenſe the ſacraments; to go before you, and join with you, in public prayer; to preach to you in the congregation; to admoniſh you in private; and by all other means to inſtruct you in the truths and duties of religion, and to lead you to faith and godlineſs. Your duty towards him is as follows. You are bound to reverence his

character, as a Miniſter of JESUS CHRIST, ordained by his authority, to guide and forward you in your way to Heaven. It behoves you, as you value your immortal ſouls, to liſten to his inſtruction and admonition. Juſtice requires you to recompenſe him for his labours, in the manner and meaſure which the laws appoint; and, when that proviſion is not ſufficient, by your free gift. Gratitude calls upon you, moreover, to be deeply thankful for his benevolent endeavours to advance your everlaſting welfare.

The ſecond kind of Teacher, is one who is employed by your parents or guardians to inſtruct you in learning, arts, or trade.

The Teacher of learning is bound to inſtruct you in religion, and lead you to virtue. For religion is the firſt learning; and virtue is the higheſt wiſdom: without them, no learning or wiſdom will avail you any thing. For this reaſon your Preceptor, or Schoolmaſter, devotes a portion of every week, to your information in chriſtian faith and morality. He puts into your hands ſuch religious books, as he thinks ſuitable to your age and capacity. He joins with you daily in morning and evening prayer. He brings you conſtantly to

Church. He perſuades you to all goodneſs, and deters you from all wickedneſs, by the moſt weighty conſiderations, the approbation or the diſpleaſure of GOD Almighty, and the rewards or puniſhments of another world.

Your duty towards him is as follows. You are to reſpect his office, as your Teacher and Governour, appointed to direct your ſteps in the way to goodneſs, knowledge, and happineſs. You are diligently to attend to his inſtructions, and punctually to perform his commands; whether they relate to religion, or learning, or good temper and manners, or the care of your health, cloaths, books, or money, or to any other ſubject whatſoever. Above all, you are to liſten to his leſſons of religion; for without attention to them, as I have ſaid before, no other leſſon will make you wiſe, or honoured, or happy. Your firſt leſſon of learning, for example, is your grammar: and a neceſſary one it is: for without it you will never underſtand a foreign language, nor (perfectly) even your own. But what will you gain, if, while you learn your grammar, you forget your catechiſm? if, while you grow familiar with "declenſions and moods and tenſes," you become a ſtranger to "the articles of your

"chriſtian faith," and "your duty towards "GOD and towards your Neighbour?" What will it profit you to be learned in the adventures and characters of all the "Dii Majores" and "Dii Minores" in the Pantheon, and every tradition and fable in Ovid's Metamorphoſes; and to be ignorant of the true hiſtory of the Creation, the perfections of GOD, and the means and conditions of Salvation, as delivered in the Scriptures of Truth? I would have you learn the Latin and Greek Tongues with all alacrity and diligence: they are the keys to large treaſures of knowledge and entertainment: they are neceſſary to the phyſician, the lawyer, and the divine: they are requiſite to the ornament and amuſement of every gentleman. But if, while you are acquiring theſe languages, and growing up ſound and polite ſcholars, you do not daily improve in chriſtian principles, which will make you good men, affectionate brothers huſbands and fathers, kind neighbours, and loyal ſubjects, "though you could ſpeak with the "tongues of men and of angels, and have all" claſſic taſte, and all ſcientific "knowledge,"*

* 1 Corinth. xiii. 1.

you will not be an honour to your family, or a benefit to your country.

The Teacher of any art or trade, if the learners or apprentices are placed in his houſe, or under his conſtant government, is bound to give them religious inſtruction, and lead them to godlineſs; becauſe he ſtands in the place of their parents; he has the diſpoſal of their time; and he has the opportunity and influence requiſite to this neceſſary work. Whether they be in his family or no, he is obliged to inform, and practiſe, and perfect, them in the art or trade which he profeſſes. This is the purport of his engagement with all his learners, and the condition of his indenture with his apprentices; if therefore he waſte their time, or apply it to any buſineſs foreign to his art or trade, he lies equally under the reproach of his own conſcience, and the cenſure of the law.

The duty of Learners or Apprentices is as follows. Obedience to the directions of their maſter, as a teacher; and to his rules and orders (if they be in his houſe) as the maſter of his family. Diligence, in learning their art or trade, and if they be apprentices, in applying their ſkill and labour to the benefit of their maſter. Fidelity, in conſulting his intereſt,

and in keeping ſecret the private concerns of his trade and family.

THE "Honour" which children pay to their parents, and ſervants to their maſters, and learners to their teachers, is the foundation of all civil obedience and order; and the diligence of parents, maſters, and teachers, in the religious inſtruction of their children, ſervants, and learners, is equally the ground-work of all chriſtian morality. Families and ſchools are the ſeedplots of the church and ſtate: they are the nurſeries of chriſtians and citizens. Children well educated make good men; ſervants well directed are afterwards good maſters; learners well taught and employed become uſeful teachers: forming, and continuing from age to age, a Chriſtian Nation, holden together by the bonds of moral duty and civil government, proſperous in the affairs of time, and hopeful in the iſſues of eternity: the parent, the maſter, and the teacher, honoured; the child, the ſervant, and the learner, growing in religious knowledge, improving in all virtue, led on by good example, obliging to his equals, reſpectful to his ſuperiors, "kindly affectioned"* to all men. How

* Rom. xii. 10.

deeply does it concern every parent, maſter, and teacher, anxiouſly to diſcharge his part of this beneficial duty, for the ſake of himſelf, his family, and his country!

YOUR Governours are "the KING, and all "who are put in authority under him;"* that is to ſay, the two houſes of parliament, all judges, and other magiſtrates. To their protection you are indebted, under divine providence, for every worldly bleſſing. By them your life, and liberty, and property, are preſerved, from the violence of foreign enemies, and of wicked men at home. Through their means you enjoy the inheritance of your fathers, and the fruits of your own ſkill and labour. Under their guardianſhip the rich man poſſeſſes his houſe and eſtate; the tradeſman his ſhop and merchandize; the poor man his cottage and his wages, his poultry and his ſheep. Without laws and government no man would have any thing. For who would build a houſe which he is not ſure to poſſeſs? Who would raiſe corn and breed cattle, for his enemies from abroad, or for plunderers at home? The whole country would become a wilderneſs: and every one would be obliged to take ſhelter

* Catechiſm.

under a tree, and to live upon the fleſh of wild birds and beaſts, and the natural fruits of the uncultivated earth. Whereas under our laws and government, every Engliſhman ſleeps in peace and ſafety in his own houſe: he "ſits "ſecure under his vine and under his fig-"tree,"* his oak and his apple-tree: he eats of his own field, and his own flock; or of the food which he purchaſes with his money, or gains by his trade or labour. Whatever he has, be it much or little, it is ſure to be his own, to him and to his children after him: no man can take it from them. He has alſo, under the bleſſing of God, an equal chance with his neighbour of gaining more. He may ſee his children more thriving, (though not, perhaps, more happy) than himſelf. Many a man born of lowly parents has become great in church and ſtate: and many a wealthy merchant has learnt the firſt rules of arithmetic in a charity ſchool.

Your duty to your Governours is as follows. Firſt. Reverence to their office, as "Miniſters "of God to you for good."† For although the Perſons be appointed by human laws and conſtitutions, the Office is ordained by God.

* Micah iv. 4. † See Rom. xiii. 1—7.

Whoever, therefore, diſregardeth the office, diſregardeth the ordinance of GOD. This reverence is, in an eſpecial degree and manner, due to the KING, on account of his high dignity, pre-eminence, and authority; as the ſovereign guardian of your lives, liberties, and properties; as the maker jointly with the houſes of parliament, and the ſupreme executor, of the laws. This reverence is due to every other of your Governours, in proportion to their rank and order, whether bodies or individuals, eccleſiaſtical or civil. Your ſecond duty to your Governours is obedience to them, and aſſiſtance when required, in the execution of the laws. Your third duty is cheerful payment of taxes, adjudged by the King and Parliament to be neceſſary to the defence, government, and proſperity, of your country.

Theſe are duties of us all, as ſubjects, to our Governours. But many perſons are, at the ſame time, ſubjects, in common with their fellow citizens, and governours, as magiſtrates ſet over them. While, therefore, they have, as Subjects, the duties abovementioned towards their governours, they have alſo, as Magiſtrates, the duties following towards their governours and their fellow citizens. They are

ſingularly bound to ſhew, in their words and actions, reverence and obedience to the King and all who are in authority over them: for how unſeemly, and how pernicious, would it be in them, to exhibit any diſreſpect to ſuperior authority, or to the commiſſion under which they act, or to the laws which they have engaged to execute? They are obliged to a ſteady exertion of the powers veſted in them; eſpecially in matters which concern the peace and well-being of the nation, and the ſecurity, good order, and comfort, of their particular diſtricts. They are not only to puniſh an actual breach of the peace, but to correct miſdemeanours which, in the provident eye of the Law, appear to lead to it, as vagrancy, drunkenneſs, lewd prints and publications, profaneneſs: eſpecially in cities, towns, and other populous places; wherein the intercourſe of many renders vice more contagious, and their union makes crimes more practicable and more dangerous. They are, in the meaſure and manner preſcribed by the Law, the Guardians of the Morals of the people; Guardians, againſt evil counſel and evil example: they are appointed for "the puniſhment of wickedneſs and vice, "and for the maintenance of religion and vir-

" tue."* By a diſcreet and vigilant diſcharge of this weighty truſt,† they have the high honour and ſatisfaction of advancing the proſperity and welfare of their country, and contributing to the happineſs of their fellow citizens in this life, and in a life to come.

THE fifth commandment concludes thus: " that thy days may be long," that thou mayeſt have long life and peaceable‡ continuance, " in the land which the Lord thy GOD " giveth thee." The law of Moſes incited

* Common Prayer.

† " Government is a great truſt; and the powers of it are not intended merely to do honour to thoſe who have them, but muſt be uſed for the good of the community. This is a truth ſufficiently known; it has been ſounded in the ears of the nation, without ceaſing: but the misfortune is, that this doctrine has been applied ſo conſtantly to the Supreme Magiſtrate only, that thoſe who have Subordinate Powers derived from his authority, forget, or are not accuſtomed, to make the application to themſelves. And yet ſurely there is not a Conſtable, but has, in proportion to the power the law gives him, a truſt repoſed in him, in behalf of his King and his Country. Thoſe who are in higher offices have ſtill greater reaſon, as more depends upon the exerciſe of their authority, to be watchful for the community. The good of ſociety muſt be influenced by their conduct and example, one way or other. Great officers of juſtice cannot be uſeleſs, without being pernicious."

Biſhop Sherlock's letter to the inhabitants of London and Weſtminſter on account of the earthquakes, 1750.

‡ Deut. v. 16.

the people of Iſrael to religious duty by a ſpecial promiſe of bleſſing on earth, over and above their general expectation of reward in heaven. This promiſe is referred to in the ſecond commandment, and is here expreſſed in the fifth: which two commandments are ſo enforced, as we ſuppoſe, becauſe the ſin forbidden in the one is ſubverſive of all piety to GOD, and the duties of the other are the foundation of all charity to man. The Goſpel of Chriſt gives the obedient diſciple no unfailing aſſurance of happineſs in this world. His ſure reward awaits him in another. Nevertheleſs Chriſtian "godlineſs is profitable" in reſpect to both worlds: having, in a limited degree and extent, "the promiſe of the life which now "is, as well as of that which is to come."* It has the promiſe of the life which now is, in the natural courſe of things, in the ordinary providence of GOD, and frequently, I believe, in his eſpecial bleſſing. Temperance, ſobriety, and chaſtity, lead to health and long life. Honour paid to parents, and religious education given to children, render a family peaceable and happy. Obedient ſervants, and inſtructing maſters, make a houſe orderly and proſper-

* 1 Tim. iv. 8.

ous. The teacher has the reward of his fidelity in profit and reputation: and the learner carries with him the fruits of his early diligence, into his profeſſion, trade, or retirement. But of all the chriſtian virtues, no one is, I think, ſo completely neceſſary, and ſo largely conducive, to the repoſe and happineſs of this world, as the willing obedience of ſubjects to Governours, and the watchful care of Governours over ſubjects. The life, liberty, and property, of every citizen depend upon the ſafety of his Country: the meaſure of his conveniences and comforts riſes or falls with its proſperity: his life, liberty, property, conveniences, and comforts, all are hazarded, and moſt, if not all, periſh, in its ruin. The honour paid to Governours, and the protection given to ſubjects, and the conſequent union of the whole community, are at all times eſſential to the ſafety and proſperity of a State: but in ſeaſons of Diſtreſs and Danger, they are neceſſary to its Exiſtence. The Duty and the Reward, the Sin and the Puniſhment, are THEN ſet plainly together before the eyes of every man: "Honour the King, the Conſti-" tution, and the Laws, that thy days may be " long in the land which the Lord thy GOD

"hath given thee." In ſuch ſeaſons particularly, let every man beware, leſt, ſeduced by party contention, a diſcontented ſpirit, or a luſt of reform, he ſhorten his days, or live a ſlave to his enemies in his own land, or a wretched exile out of it. He has this ſimple leſſon to recollect and practiſe: obedience to the Laws, and ſupport to the Magiſtrate in the execution of them. This is his Duty; and it is his Safeguard: for "Rebellion" againſt lawful authority "is as the ſin of witchcraft;"* it is a man's entering into a league with Satan, againſt the order of nature and providence, and the well-being of mankind, and his own ſoul. The contriver of revolutions and "the beginner of "ſtrife" in a country, "is as one who let-"teth out water"† from an embankment of the ſea: he drowns the fields and meadows and villages in the neighbourhood, and is ſoon after ſeen himſelf a carcaſe floating upon the borders of the flood.

The Law of Moſes contained "types‡ and "ſhadows§ of things to come" under the Goſ-

* 1 Sam. xv. 23. † Prov. xvii. 14.
‡ 1 Cor. x. 11. margin. Rom. v. 14. § Coloſ. ii. 17.

pel of Chriſt. A type is any one thing repreſenting another, as the ſtamp on the wax does the figure on the ſeal. A ſhadow repreſents, leſs perfectly, the body which makes it by hindering the light. The many continual ſacrifices offered in the temple, were a type of the all-ſufficient ſacrifice, which was to be once offered on the croſs.* The weekly ſabbath was a type of that unceaſing reſt, which awaiteth good men in the world to come.† The holy of holies in the temple was a type of Heaven.‡ The land of Canaan given to the people of Iſrael was a type of a better country,§ promiſed through Jeſus Chriſt to good perſons of all nations. The worldly rewards of obedience, given to the Jews in their land of ſojourn, were ſhadows of the heavenly rewards, which are promiſed to Chriſtians, in their own ſettled country and everlaſting home.‖ In this manner you may apply to yourſelves, the promiſe made to the Jews in the fifth commandment. "Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy

* Heb. x. 1—14.

† Heb. iv. 1—11.

‡ Heb. ix. 24. and x. 19, 20.

§ Heb. xi. 14—16. 2 Pet. iii. 13. Heb. xii. 22.

‖ Read John xiv. 2. Heb. xi. 16. and xiii. 14.

" days may be long in the land which the " Lord thy GOD giveth thee." " Keep this " commandment, (and the others alſo) and " thou ſhalt enter* into a land which never " can be loſt, and a life which will never end: " thy days therein ſhall be long and happy; " long, as the days of eternity; and happy, as " the favour and preſence of GOD can make " them."

* Matt. xix. 17.

SERMON IX.

ON THE COMMANDMENTS --VI.

I JOHN III. 15.

WHOSOEVER HATETH HIS BROTHER IS A MURDERER; AND YE KNOW THAT NO MURDERER HATH ETERNAL LIFE ABIDING IN HIM.

OUR duties towards our neighbour are of two kinds. One kind regards thoſe perſons only, to whom we bear any particular relation; as, for example, child and parent. The other kind regards all men, whether we bear to them any particular relation or not.

As life is the foundation of all enjoyment in this world, and is the only time which GOD has given us to prepare ourſelves for another, our firſt duty towards every man is to preſerve his life; and the higheſt failure of our duty towards him is to deſtroy it. Yet this crime is the firſt, after the ſin of Adam, which is recorded in ſacred hiſtory. When the parent had tranſgreſſed the firſt law of his nature, obedience to his Maker, his offſpring tranſ-

greſſed the ſecond, kindneſs to his fellow-creature. The ſentence of death which had paſſed upon all men, was executed by the hand of a Murderer: and the firſt event, with which we are acquainted, in the family of our firſt parents, was the blood of one ſon ſhed by another. So early, and ſo ſtrong, a proof did fallen man give of the corruption of his nature! and ſo needful was it in the ſight of GOD, to guard him, by awful penalties, againſt a crime, to which all the ſubtility of the Great Deceiver* could (probably) never have drawn him in his ſtate of perfection and innocence!

The heinouſneſs of this crime appears from the following conſiderations. It is ſhocking to our nature: GOD ſheweth us how odious it is in his ſight, by engraving a horror of it in our hearts. It is the greateſt evil that we can bring upon a fellow-creature; putting an end to his being in this world; ſhortening his preparation for another; hurrying him into the preſence of his judge, with all his ſins upon his head; with little, if any, time for repentance, and with none for amendment. It is a deſtroying of the chief work of the Creator in this lower world, and a defacing

* See Gen. iii. 1. and Rev. xii. 9.

of his image: this is marked expreſsly, as an aggravation of the crime, and one ground of of the puniſhment; "whoſo ſheddeth man's "blood, by man ſhall his blood be ſhed; for "in the image of God made he man."* It is to oppoſe the deſign of GOD's creation and providence; which is, that man ſhould continue on earth "all the days of his appointed "time, until his change come,"† and then paſs to a better ſtate in heaven: for this gracious purpoſe (among others) the world and all things in it are preſerved: but the murderer, ſo far as concerns the perſon ſlain by him, is as if he pulled the ſun from his place, and ſhook the foundations of the earth; for the victim of his malice "maketh his untimely "bed in darkneſs;‡ he lieth down before his "hour, and riſeth not until the heavens be "no more."§ The murderer hardens himſelf againſt every feeling of nature, and burſts outrageouſly through every bond of duty: with one audacious ſtroke he daſhes to pieces the Two Tables of the Law, and renounces all piety to GOD and charity to man.

GOD alone, the Giver of life, hath a right

* Gen. ix. 6.
† Job xiv. 14.
‡ Job xvii. 13.
§ Job xiv. 12.

to take it away: He doeth it by the natural decay of our bodies, and by calamitous accidents; which he ordains and permits to execute upon us his ſentence, "unto duſt ſhall "thou return." He doeth it alſo by granting his authority to man in particular caſes. Theſe caſes are determined by his holy word, and by the laws of man agreeable thereto.

Firſt. "GOD ſaid unto Noah and his ſons," and through them to all ſucceeding generations, "whoſo ſheddeth man's blood by man "ſhall his blood be ſhed." GOD commandeth the murderer to be puniſhed with death. This righteous ſentence is to be executed by the Governours of every country.

Secondly. There are other crimes, which, although leſs heinous than murder, yet ſo often lead to it, approach in their effects ſo near to it, and are ſo deſtructive of the comfort of life, that it is thought agreeable to the word and will of GOD, to puniſh them with death. Many crimes of this kind were ſo puniſhed by the law of GOD given by Moſes to the people of Iſrael. The Goſpel of Chriſt hath made no alteration in this matter; accordingly Chriſtian nations have ſo puniſhed them in all ages.

In theſe caſes of murder, and other like crimes, the King, in whoſe name the perſon is brought to trial; the Jury, which finds him guilty; the Judge, who condemns him; and the Officer who ſees the ſentence executed; all act under the authority of GOD. The Magiſtrate is "the miniſter of GOD for the good "of mankind: he beareth not the ſword in "vain:"* he draweth it under the commiſſion of his heavenly maſter: he uſeth it according to the laws of his country, with the judgment of his fellow citizens, agreeably to the rules of juſtice, applied with caution, and tempered with mercy.

Thirdly. As we are commanded to Puniſh murder by the death of the murderer, ſo are we allowed and directed to Prevent it (if neceſſary) by the death of him who attempts it. If your life, or the life of another, be ſo frightfully attacked, that it probably cannot be preſerved without killing him who attacks it, in this unhappy caſe, you may and ought to ſave your own life, or the life of the other, by the death of him who murderouſly aims to take it away. But if you can preſerve the life which is in danger, without the death of the

* Rom. xiii. 4.

perſon who endangers it, you are bound to ſeize him alive, and deliver him over to the magiſtrate.

Fourthly. As we are allowed to ſave the life of one or more perſons by the death (if neceſſary) of him who attacks it, ſo may we preſerve the lives of a whole country, by the death of the inhabitants of any other country, who ſeek to deſtroy them: and it is the neceſſity of this ſelf-defence which makes War lawful. The Governours of every country are the judges of this neceſſity, and of the lawfulneſs of any war. When they have declared war, the ſubjects may lawfully fight in it; and ſuch of them as are duly called upon are bound ſo to do. The country muſt be protected againſt the enemy: this protection may, moreover, render it expedient or neceſſary to invade the country of the enemy: and when death enſues in this unhappy conflict, the ſoldier is no murderer of him who falls by his hand in battle; provided he ſpares them who ſurrender, and offers no violence to the helpleſs. When John the Baptiſt, the forerunner of the Prince of Peace, preached repentance and amendment of life, the Soldiers (among others) aſked him, "what ſhall we do?" He did not

adviſe them to leave their employment, but to act juſtly and humanely in it: "do violence to "no man, neither accuſe any falſely, and be "content with your wages."* The dreadful neceſſity of war, and the commands of government, juſtify the Soldier in the diſcharge of his melancholy duty: he has only to perform it mercifully; and to implore the Lord of Hoſts to reſtore to his countrymen and to his enemies the bleſſings of peace.

Self-murder is wicked like the murder of any other perſon. It has all the ſame marks of wickedneſs. It is an act from which our nature ſhrinks back with horror. It is a deſtroying of the work of God, and a defacing of his image. It is an oppoſition to the deſign of his providence; which wills you to continue here ſo long as he permits your life to laſt. It is to ſhorten your own day of grace, and the time of your "working out your ſalvation."† It is to ruſh uncalled into the preſence of your Maker, with all your ſins upon your head; with one ſin in particular, of which you have no time to repent, becauſe it was the laſt act of your life.

* Luke iii. 14. † Philip. ii. 12.

To fight in a duel is an attempt to murder, or a conſent to the hazard of murder: and to kill in a duel is murder. So to fight is to endanger, or deſtroy, the life of man without any authority from GOD: for it is neither a puniſhment of murder, nor a prevention of it; it is not a neceſſary defence of yourſelf, or any other perſon, or your country: it is not a defence required by the magiſtrate, or permitted by the laws. It is, moreover, a conſenting to the peril of loſing your own life, in a way which may reaſonably be eſteemed ſelf-murder. It is a running of the hazard, that your ſoul may fly into the world of ſpirits, and the preſence of GOD, loaded with the guilt of two unrepented ſins; leaving your body fallen by your own agreement, and either ſtained with the blood of a brother, or graſping the inſtruments of his intended death. Oh! miſerable the man, who expoſeth his ſoul to all theſe horrors!

Every act or neglect which tends to injure the health, or ſhorten the life, of another, or of a man's ſelf, approaches, in various degrees and proportions, towards the ſin of murder. He who careleſsly draws his neighbour into danger, or does not endeavour to the utmoſt

to reſcue him out of it, is upon the borders of this ſin. He who ſuffers him to languiſh in want or ſickneſs, when he is able to aſſiſt him, is near them. He is the more faulty, if he be an Overſeer of the Poor, appointed to watch over and relieve them; or if he be a Magiſtrate, ordained to correct the errors of the Overſeer. Theſe Officers are, in law and conſcience, anſwerable for the health and life of them, who fall under their immediate care or ſuperintendence. He who harraſſes the mind of his neighbour by injuſtice, unkindneſs, or ſlander, is not innocent. Theſe faults are highly aggravated, if a perſon commit them towards his or her own family. The careleſsneſs of a parent hath ſometimes withered the health of a child in early ſpring. The undutifulneſs, profligacy, and ruin, of a child have more frequently given, to the diſappointed and afflicted parents, the untimely wrinkles of old age; or even "brought down their grey hairs "with ſorrow to the grave,"* Some huſbands, and many wives, have fallen a ſacrifice to the heart-breaking unfaithfulneſs of their partners, or to other cruel treatment. Some have ſuffered by continual repetition of

* Gen. xlii. 38.

little unkindneſſes, equally deſtructive to happineſs, and fatal to health and life. Theſe latter faults are to be ſtrictly guarded againſt, becauſe they ſteal unperceived upon the conſcience of the offending perſon, and upon the life of the ſufferer: he who would abhor to plant a dagger in the breaſt of his companion, may poſſibly inflame a hidden feſter, equally certain, however ſlow, in its effects.

He who eats or drinks to exceſs, takes a daily poiſon, which brings him ſooner or later to an untimely end. "Who hath woe? who hath "ſorrow? who hath contention? who hath "babbling," that is, nonſenſical talk and diſpute? "who hath wounds without cauſe? "who hath redneſs of eyes? they that tarry "long at the wine, they that go to ſeek ſtrong "wine. Look not thou with delight upon the "liquor, when it giveth its colour in the cup: "at the laſt it biteth like a ſerpent, and ſting-"eth like an adder."* Drinking is a grievous folly: it is a dreadful ſin, againſt GOD, the giver of all good things; againſt a man's life; and againſt his family. What ſhall we ſay of the Drunkard, when, (as his cuſtom generally is) not content with waſting his Own health

* Prov. xxiii. 29—32.

and life, he is inviting his neighbour to the ſame wickedneſs? "Woe unto them who are "mighty to drink wine; and men of ſtrength "to mingle ſtrong drink."* "Woe unto thee, "that giveſt thy neighbour drink, that putteſt "thy bottle to him, and makeſt Him drunken "alſo, that thou mayeſt look on his naked-"neſs;"† on the diſhonour of his perſon, and the diſorder of his mind and converſation; on his want of decency, ſenſe, and virtue. Thou wouldeſt not put a piſtol to his breaſt, or to thy own; but thou layeſt a mine under his feet and thy own, which will, in time, aſſuredly deſtroy you both.

Laſtly. "He who hateth his brother is," in the view and language of the Apoſtle, "a mur-"derer." His meaning is this: the want of that love which every man owes to his fellow-creature and fellow-chriſtian, is the cauſe of every offence committed againſt his comfort, health, and life. It ſhews itſelf in various and unequal tranſgreſſions of duty towards him; in neglect, unkindneſs, injuſtice, cruelty, murder. On the contrary, love towards him, leads to "the fulfilling of the law;"‡

* Iſ. v. 11. † Habakkuk ii. 15.

‡ Rom. xiii. 10.

and ſhews itſelf in the various oppoſite virtues; in obliging behaviour, in good-natured actions, in juſt dealing, in works of charity and generoſity. It inclines you to contribute every thing you can to the peace, and health, and proſperity, and virtue, of your neighbour. It moves you ſo to behave yourſelf towards him, that, as far as depends upon your conduct, advice, and example, he may be happy in this life, and bleſſed in a life to come.

SERMON X.

ON THE COMMANDMENTS---VII.

EPHESIANS V. 33.

LET EVERY ONE OF YOU SO LOVE HIS WIFE EVEN AS HIMSELF, AND THE WIFE SEE THAT SHE REVERENCE HER HUSBAND.

THE happineſs of life is chiefly enjoyed in your own family: and the virtues which produce this happineſs are principally learned and practiſed there. The foundation of happineſs and virtue in a family lies in the religious faithfulneſs of all the members of it to each other; and the corner-ſtone of this foundation is the faithfulneſs of the Governours of it to each other, namely, the Huſband and the Wife. The Seventh Commandment, therefore, forbids the higheſt breach of this faithfulneſs; and, by conſequence, enjoins every duty which makes a part of it, or flows from it, or is any way connected with it.

Marriage was appointed by GOD in paradiſe, for the happineſs of the firſt man and woman, and of their poſterity. It is the union

of one man and one woman, in heart, fortune, and habitation, for life. The cauſes for which marriage was ordained, and the duties of married perſons towards each other, are clearly ſtated in the Marriage Service in the Book of Common Prayer: which ſervice every married perſon will do well to read frequently. There, the huſband will find the duty which he hath, in the moſt ſolemn manner, promiſed towards his wife: "to love her, to comfort her, to ho-
"nour and keep her in ſickneſs and in health,
"and, forſaking all other, to keep himſelf
"only to her ſo long as they both ſhall live."
There alſo, the wife will find the duty which ſhe hath, in like manner, promiſed towards her huſband: "to obey him, to ſerve him, to love,
"honour, and keep him, in ſickneſs and in
"health, and, forſaking all other, to keep
"herſelf only to him ſo long as they both ſhall
"live."

After theſe mutual promiſes, the Marriage Covenant is expreſſed, firſt, by the man, and afterwards by the woman, in this accuſtomed form; which declares the nature, the duties, and the perpetuity, of the agreement. "I, M.
"take thee, N. for my wedded wife, to have
"and to hold," to be in my continual poſſeſ-

ſion, "from this day forward, for better for "worſe," in reſpect of thy mind and manners, "for richer for poorer," in reſpect of thy eſtate or ſubſtance, "in ſickneſs and in health," in reſpect of thy perſon, in ſhort, under all changes and chances whatſoever, "till death "us do part; to love, and to cheriſh, accord-"ing to God's Holy Ordinance," agreeably to all the conditions and duties of marriage declared in the word of God: and "thereto," to my duly keeping this covenant, "I plight," or give, "thee my troth," my truth and faith. The woman uſes the ſame form, adding her engagement to "obey."

Then the man finiſhes the covenant on his part, by delivering a ring to the Miniſter for the woman, and afterwards putting it on her finger, with a certain form of words. It was an ancient cuſtom to give money, or ſomething valuable, to the father of the woman who was to be married, as a purchaſe of his conſent: it became uſual, in times following, to give it to the woman herſelf, as a dowry and a pledge of maintenance. With a view to theſe cuſtoms, the ring is given as a thing of value, and it is generally of gold. It is alſo given on another account. A ring had

anciently a ſeal upon it, by which orders and covenants were ſigned,* and things of value conveyed or ſecured. In this view, the delivery of a ring was a token of perfect love and confidence, and implied the conveyance of authority and property.† The man, therefore, putting the ring on the woman's finger, addreſſes her thus: "With this ring," as an accuſtomed pledge or token, "I thee "wed:" I make a covenant of marriage with thee, and I convey to thee all the rights of a wife: which rights are, that "with my body "I thee worſhip," or honour, that is, I give thee myſelf, and all title and honour due to me; "and with all my worldly goods I thee "endow," or make thee a ſharer in them all: I take thee to be my wife, the poſſeſſor of my perſon, honour, and property, the miſtreſs of my houſe, and the mother of my children. The woman finiſhes the covenant on her part, by accepting the ring and the words ſpoken.

The cauſes for which matrimony was ordained, as ſtated in the marriage ſervice, the mutual promiſes given before the covenant of

* Eſth. iii. 12. and viii. 8.

† See Gen. xli. 42. Eſth. iii. 10, 11. and viii. 2.

marriage, and the form in which the covenant is made, comprehend and impoſe theſe duties of married perſons towards each other.

Firſt. Love, or affection. This ought to be the cauſe of their union, and ever to accompany it. Affection deeply rooted, preſerved, and daily growing, will enſure the performance of all other duties. Kind thoughts, and words, and actions, will flow from it as naturally and ſurely, as water flows from a ſpring, or "as the ſparks fly upwards;"* hindered perhaps ſometimes, and turned out of their way, by accidental impediments, but ſoon recovering their ſtrength and courſe. To preſerve and increaſe this affection in your own breaſt, recollect the times when you have moſt warmly felt it, and moſt heartily profeſſed it: remember alſo the returns of it which you have received from your companion. Think continually of ſubſtantial kindneſſes; and you will forget ſlight offences. Keep great virtues conſtantly in your view; and you will not ſee ſmall faults. To preſerve and increaſe the affection of your companion, renew the proofs which you have given of your own.

Secondly. Married perſons have engaged

* Job v. 7.

" to honour, cheriſh, and keep, each other:" that is, they are to ſhew to each other all poſſible reſpect and kindneſs; to take all care of each other's health and life:* each to provide for the maintenance of both, the huſband according to his ability, (which is uſually the greateſt,) the wife according to her's.

Thirdly. The huſband makes a ſpecial promiſe "to comfort" the wife; that is, to protect, ſupport, and ſtrengthen her, as is the natural duty of the ſtronger towards the weaker, under the common infirmities of human nature, and the particular tenderneſs of her ſex.

Fourthly. The wife ſpecially promiſes "to " obey and ſerve" the huſband. Marriage, like all other reaſonable covenants, is deſigned for the benefit of both parties alike. It is for the benefit of huſband and wife, that they ſhould be as equal in rank and power as the nature of things will permit. But that they ſhould be equal in every point and circumſtance, is neither poſſible nor deſirable. In all ſocieties there muſt be a leader. With reſpect to this ſociety, " Adam was firſt formed, then " Eve."† Man is ordinarily ſtronger in body,

* Eph. v. 28, 29. † 1 Tim. ii. 13.

more vigorous in mind, and more capable of labour in both. Divine laws have given the huſband the pre-eminence; and human laws have made him the poſſeſſor of the joint property, and anſwerable for the maintenance of himſelf, his wife, and his family. On all theſe accounts, as it is the ſpecial duty of the huſband to "comfort" the wife, ſo it is the ſpecial duty of the wife to "obey" the huſband. As he is called upon to uſe his greater abilities in giving counſel, protection, and comfort, to his wife; ſo is ſhe required, in all things lawful and reaſonable, to follow the advice of her huſband, as head of their family, and guardian of their property, and anſwerable to the ſtate for the due order and proper uſe of each. Religion, affection, and prudence, will render both theſe duties eaſy and pleaſant. The labour and anxiety of the huſband in the ſupport and ordering of his family, is recompenſed by the tenderneſs and aſſiſtance of the wife: and the obedience of the wife, rarely neceſſary, perhaps never called for, is rewarded by the obligingneſs and compliance of the huſband.

Fifthly. The huſband promiſes to the wife, "forſaking all other, to keep himſelf only to "her;" and the wife promiſes in like manner

to the huſband. Marriage is the union in heart of one man and one woman. It admits no third perſon. Married perſons preſerve their ſuitable regard for their parents, their brethren, their acquaintance, and all mankind: but their love and their company they owe to each other. "The wife hath not power over her-"ſelf, but the huſband hath; and the huſband "hath not power over himſelf, but the wife "hath."* They have devoted themſelves, each to the other, for their mutual "ſociety, "help, and comfort."

The nature of the Marriage Covenant, the promiſes made in it, and the duties following it, ſhew the greatneſs of the ſin of Adultery. It is a breach of a moſt important contract, made in a ſolemn manner, confirmed by religious vows. It is a ſin moſt injurious to the happineſs of the parties, to the welfare of families, and to the good order and proſperity of a country. By the law of Moſes it was puniſhed with death: it is forbidden by the Goſpel under the more awful penalty of future judgment.

Marriage is the only ſtate in which a Chriſtian man and woman may have company to-

* 1 Cor. vii. 4.

gether. The Chriſtian Law concerning this matter is plain and expreſs.* Many arguments might be urged againſt the breach of this law from the worldly evils it brings upon the offenders; the profligacy and idleneſs of the man; the miſery of the woman, left always to ſhame, and frequently to want; the neglect of the children; dreadful diſeaſes; the loſs of all family comfort: but far more alarming than all theſe conſiderations is the language of Holy Scripture, which threatens the Sinner with puniſhment in a life to come; declaring "that he hath no inheritance in the kingdom "of Chriſt and of God."†

Your chriſtian duty, therefore, is either to live chaſtely in a ſingle ſtate, or to marry. If you marry, remember every article of your marriage vow. Do every thing in your power to make your companion happy, in health of body, in peace of mind, in maintenance ſuited to your condition. Seek theſe things for your wife, or huſband, as you would for yourſelf. You are both as one: and "no man ever hated "his own fleſh, but nouriſheth and cheriſheth "it."‡ To be unkind, injurious, cruel, to

* Read Heb. xiii. 4. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 18. Epheſ. v. 3.

† Eph. v. 5. ‡ Eph. v. 29.

the partner of your bed, is as unnatural, as to be a ſelf-tormentor, a ſelf-robber, a ſelf-murderer; with the aggravation of love ill-requited, confidence abuſed, and oaths profaned.

When I ſpeak of your duty to make your companion happy, I carry my views to the happineſs of both worlds. Indeed no reaſonable diſcourſe can otherwiſe be holden concerning happineſs. For what is the happineſs of a day, a month, a year, or many years, if miſery, endleſs miſery, is to follow? Guide therefore your choſen friend and fellow traveller, by faith and piety, through a hopeful life to a bleſſed immortality. Let the Chriſtian Pair improve each other in every religious ſentiment, habit, and reſolution. Let "the un-"chriſtian wife," (if any ſuch, alas! there be among us) "be ſanctified by her huſband, "and the unchriſtian huſband be ſanctified by "his wife;"* let each be made Holy by the other; that is, let each be "perſuaded to be-"come a Chriſtian,"† to ſeek the pardon of ſin through a Divine Mediator, to aſk grace to do well from the Holy Spirit, to hope with well doing to inherit the promiſes of the Goſpel.

* 1 Cor. vii. 14. † Acts xxvi. 28.

Thus will they walk together "in the ways of "pleaſantneſs and in the paths of peace,"* enjoying the delights of unvaried friendſhip and pure affection, patiently ſubmitting to the unavoidable evils of time, and looking humbly forward to the goods of eternity.

* Prov. iii. 17.

SERMON XI.

ON THE COMMANDMENTS---VIII.

EPHESIANS IV. 28.

LET HIM THAT STOLE STEAL NO MORE: BUT RATHER LET HIM LABOUR, WORKING WITH HIS HANDS THE THING THAT IS GOOD, THAT HE MAY HAVE TO GIVE TO HIM THAT NEEDETH.

OUR firſt parents, in their ſtate of innocence, had no need of labour for the maintenance of life. The willing produce of the earth was ſufficient. When they ſinned, they were doomed "in the ſweat of their face "to eat bread:" and man was ſent from the garden of Eden "to till the earth from whence "he was taken."* When "Abel became a "keeper of ſheep, and Cain a tiller of the "ground,"† each was entitled to the fruits of his labour. The lamb and the fleece were Abel's, and the grain was Cain's. The reſt of Adam's children, and their children after them, claimed, with equal juſtice, each, the produce of his flock or his field: nor could

* Gen. iii. † Gen. iv.

any one pretend to milk or ſhear the cattle which another had nurtured, or to reap the field which another had ſown. The hut, or the cottage, which was raiſed by the induſtry of one, could not reaſonably become a reward to the lazineſs of another. The garden which each man fenced and planted was his own: he had a like claim to the barren field, which he made fruitful by his art and labour; and to the tree alſo which he planted and reared.

It was a natural wiſh of every one to hand down to his child, or children, the effects of his ſkill and induſtry: the general reaſon and benefit of mankind confirmed his expectations, and ſecured the inheritance. To one child or more he might perhaps give his houſe, his garden, or his field. Another child, to whom he did not give either, had nevertheleſs the ability by which he acquired them: this child might go forth and ſeek a new poſſeſſion for himſelf; or he might ſtay and aſſiſt his brethren in the cultivation and improvement of theirs: he might either take a part of their lands, at an yearly price, to cultivate for his own uſe; or he might aſſiſt them for wages or maintenance in the cultivation of the whole. Thus, in a few years, the children or grand-children of the ſame

parents might be, one a Landlord, another a Farmer, and a third a Labourer; each equally entitled to his reſpective lot, having acquired it, under providence, by the gift of his parent, or his own induſtry.

Each branch of the family might, in after time, experience a change of fortune. The extravagant landlord might come to ſell his land to the frugal farmer, or induſtrious labourer: and the careleſs farmer might forfeit one part of his ſtock to his landlord for rent, and another to his labourers for wages, and ſo become a labourer himſelf. The labourer might improve his condition by ſome uſeful and ingenious trade: he might work in wood, in ſtone, or in iron: or he might build a houſe for his neighbour, or prepare the flour or the meat for his table. Other perſons might enlarge the comforts and conveniences of life, by manufacturing the produce of their own country, as the flax and wool dreſſer, the weaver and the clothier. Others again might fetch home the fruit of foreign lands, as the merchant; or retail the goods of his own or other countries, as the ſhopkeeper. All theſe perſons would acquire an equal right to their reſpective properties; the landlord to his eſtate;

the farmer to his ſtock; the labourer and the handicraftſman to his wages; the manufacturer, the merchant, and the retailer, to his profits; and each and every one to ſuch neceſſaries and conveniences and comforts, as he may from time to time purchaſe, by his rent, or his gains. Every man has ſomething which he calls his own; his land, his houſe, his money, his goods, his victuals, or at leaſt the coat upon his back. The everlaſting laws of juſtice make it immoral and ſhameful to take this property from him: the laws of Man make it criminal, and ſubject to puniſhment in this world: the laws of GOD declare it ſinful, and puniſhable in a world to come. GOD ſaith unto you, by Moſes, in the Commandment, "Thou ſhalt "not ſteal." He ſaith unto you, by the Apoſtle, in the merciful ſpirit of the Goſpel, "let him that ſtole" repent him of his ſin, and "ſteal no more;" adding, with the ſeverity of the Chriſtian Law towards all unrepenting ſinners, "be not deceived; neither "thieves, nor covetous, nor extortioners, ſhall "inherit the kingdom of GOD."*

The ſin forbidden by this commandment may be committed in various manners.

* 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

Firſt. By theft: when one perſon directly takes away, or conſumes, the property of another: as, for example, the fruit of his field or his garden, his ſheep or his poultry, his wood or his houſehold furniture, his cloaths, or his money; any thing whatſoever, whether of great value or ſmall.

Secondly. By fraud: as when the ſeller deceives the buyer in the quality of his goods; ſelling him an unſound horſe or cow for a ſound one, bad meat, or flour, or bread, at the price of good; or when the buyer takes advantage of the ignorance or diſtreſs of the ſeller, and purchaſes below the fair acknowledged price; or when any one borrows money, or otherwiſe contracts a debt, without a probability of paying; or defers the payment beyond a reaſonable time. Like to theſe diſhoneſt proceedings is the withholding of taxes. A tax is money as due to the State, as any money is due from one man to another. It is laid upon you by the Laws, under which you hold your property; it is employed, moreover, in the protection of it; you pay a part for the ſecurity of the whole. Render to "all their "dues; tribute to whom tribute is due, cuſ-"tom to whom cuſtom."*

* Rom. xiii. 7.

Thirdly. By breach of truſt: as when an attorney, agent, or ſteward, does not tranſact the buſineſs of his client or employer with attention and deſpatch: or when a ſervant or workman neglects the affairs of his maſter: in a greater degree, when one or other draws profit to himſelf from the loſs of him whoſe buſineſs he undertakes. Theſe are acts of diſhoneſty aggravated by the abuſe of confidence.

To theſe three kinds of diſhoneſty I add a Fourth: when any one conceals the theft, or the fraud, or the breach of truſt, of another. The general good of mankind makes it deſirable, that no one ſhould take, or injure, the property of another without diſcovery and puniſhment. He that diſcloſes not the diſhoneſty when he knows and can prove it, has ſome ſhare in the guilt of it: eſpecially, if he be engaged in the ſervice of the perſon injured, eating his bread, and receiving his wages. It is the ſtrict duty and intereſt of every family and neighbourhood, to unite in checking every kind of knavery.

The Apoſtle clearly points out the way to avoid all temptation to ſteal: "let him labour,

"working with his hands the thing that is "good:" let him purſue the buſineſs of ſome honeſt calling. His diligence will produce him a livelihood: he will enjoy his own property; and abhor the thought of touching that of others. Nay more, if he be proſperous, "he "may have to give to him that needeth;" he may ſweeten the bread which he eats himſelf, by giving a portion of it to a poor brother. If he happen to be unproſperous, if ſickneſs or other misfortune make his earnings inſufficient to his maintenance, he may reaſonably expect aſſiſtance from the charity of his neighbours: and if their kindneſs ſhould not ſupply him with neceſſaries, he will be provided for by the laws of his country.

To induſtry in your reſpective callings add Contentment. "Be content," ſays the ſame Apoſtle, "with ſuch things as ye have."* Life and happineſs do not require many things. "If thou wilt give me bread to eat and rai-"ment to put on," was the ſenſible prayer of the Patriarch Jacob:† and his illuſtrious Deſcendant,‡ the ſame Apoſtle again, ſpoke the ſame modeſt language: "having food and

* Heb. xiii. 5. † Gen. xxviii. 20.
‡ Rom. xi. 1.

" raiment, let us be therewith content."* It is the want of this virtue of Contentment, it is the reſtleſs deſire of having more of this world's goods than Providence has allotted, that abates the honeſty of men in every ſituation. It tempts the higher orders to be ambitious and oppreſſive, the middle to be over-reaching and fraudulent, and the lower to ſteal. It drives men from the virtuous and prudent enjoyment of what they have, to the vicious and vain purſuit of what they ought not to have, and never can enjoy. It draws them from the plain path of duty and happineſs, into the thorny ways of guilt and danger; from ſober and innocent pleaſures, to "fooliſh and hurtful " luſts, which drown them in deſtruction and " perdition."† It baniſhes from their thoughts the true end and object of their earthly pilgrimage, the riches and pleaſures of the world to come. "Labouring" exceſſively and unlawfully "for the meat that periſheth," they think little of "the meat which endureth to " everlaſting life."‡ Like "prophane," unbelieving, Eſau, they ſell "their birthright for " a meſs of pottage:" like him they will, one

* 1 Tim. vi. 8. † 1 Tim. vi. 9.
‡ John vi. 27.

day, loſe the bleſſing, though they ſeek it "carefully with tears."* They throw away the happineſs of both worlds. In this, they renounce "a goodly heritage," and "pierce "themſelves through with many ſorrows."† In the other, they forfeit an eternal inheritance, and lay open their breaſts to "the worm "which never dieth."‡

* Gen. xxv. 29—34. Heb. xii. 16, 17. † 1 Tim. vi. 10.
‡ Mark ix. 44.

SERMON XII.

ON THE COMMANDMENTS---IX.

EPHESIANS IV. 25.

PUTTING AWAY LYING, SPEAK EVERY MAN TRUTH WITH HIS NEIGHBOUR; FOR WE ARE MEMBERS ONE OF ANOTHER.

I Have obſerved in a former ſermon,* that our duties to our neighbour are of two kinds. One kind regards thoſe perſons only, to whom we bear any particular relation; as child and parent, huſband and wife. Theſe duties are enforced in the Fifth and Seventh Commandments. The other kind regards every man, whether we bear to him any particular relation or not. Theſe duties concern his life, his property, and his good name: the Sixth Commandment enjoins you to protect his life; the Eighth, his property; and the Ninth, his good name. "Thou ſhalt not bear "falſe witneſs againſt thy neighbour."

This injury may be committed in many ways and degrees.

* Sermon ix.

Firſt. By bearing falſe witneſs againſt him in a court of juſtice. This is a heinous crime. If it endangers his life, it has the guilt of murder. If it hazards his property, it is a robbery. If, in the event, it affect neither his life nor his property, it weakens, more or leſs, his credit. In either caſe the falſehood is highly aggravated by perjury. If you bear falſe witneſs in favour of your neighbour, the ſin is nearly the ſame. For by ſo doing, if it is a queſtion of property, you ſwear falſely againſt ſome other perſon: and if it is a criminal indictment, you ſwear falſely againſt your King, and country, and neighbourhood. This crime poiſons the channels of public juſtice; and turns the wholſome adminiſtration of equitable laws, into an inſtrument of injury to individuals, and terror to the whole community.

As a witneſs who offers falſe evidence in a court of juſtice is thus highly criminal and pernicious, ſo is a juryman who wilfully, or careleſsly, gives a verdict contrary to true evidence. He is even more ſo, becauſe a greater truſt is committed to him.

Secondly. This injury may be committed, by bearing falſe witneſs againſt your neigh-

bour in ordinary converſation, and the common intercourſe of life. You do this, when, in his abſence, you affirm or inſinuate any thing falſe and hurtful to him, concerning his opinions, behaviour, or character. If you affirm any thing Uncertain, and hurtful to him, you expoſe him to the hazard of the injury, and yourſelf accordingly to the hazard of the guilt. If, moreover, from any thing which is true concerning him, you draw a falſe or unfair concluſion which is hurtful to him, you are ſtill injurious and guilty.

Though this kind of falſe witneſs be not commonly ſo pernicious to the life and property of your neighbour, as that which is borne in a court of juſtice, yet it is always diſadvantageous to him, and frequently in a great degree: and though it eſcape the guilt and puniſhment of perjury, it has all the guilt and infamy of lying and miſrepreſentation. When it is done deliberately, it proceeds from the ſame evil heart; when careleſsly, from a great want of probity and charity.

Thirdly. You Approach the ſin of bearing falſe witneſs againſt your neighbour in ordinary converſation, when, in his abſence, without ſufficient reaſon and conſideration,

you are forward to affirm or inſinuate any thing True, which is diſadvantageous to his character. "Thou ſhalt not go up and down "as a Tale-bearer among thy people," ſays the benevolent law of Moſes.* The tale may poſſibly be true, but the bearer is blamable. The nature of his tales may probably degenerate, from true to doubtful, and from doubtful to falſe. His diſpoſition to ſcatter them may at firſt ariſe from idleneſs and folly: but it will grow into uncharitableneſs; and may end in malice. In all its ſtages, it is diſhonourable to himſelf, injurious to ſome other perſon, and deſtructive of good neighbourhood.

Fourthly. You commit the ſin of bearing falſe witneſs againſt your neighbour in ordinary converſation, when, in his Preſence, you affirm or inſinuate any thing falſe and hurtful to him, concerning his opinions, behaviour, or character: and you Approach this ſin, when, in his preſence, you affirm or inſinuate, any thing True and hurtful to him. In his abſence, you injure him in the opinion of others: in his preſence, you ſink him in his own: you diſturb the tranquillity of his mind: you provoke him, moreover, to un-

* Levit. xix. 16.

civil returns; and deſtroy the peace of ſociety. "The words of a Tale-bearer," whether heard by the injured perſon, or reported to him, "are as deep wounds, going down into "the innermoſt parts of the belly."* The beginning of ſtrife "is as when one letteth out "water;"† a flood, more eaſily begun than ſtopped. "Behold how great a matter a little fire "kindleth. An evil tongue is a fire, a world "of iniquity: ſometimes it ſetteth on fire" a whole town or village; "and is itſelf ſet on "fire by hell;" that is, by the baſe paſſions of a Fallen Spirit.‡ To extinguiſh this fire, the evil tongue muſt be ſilenced: "where no "wood is, there the fire goeth out; ſo where "there is no tale-bearer, the ſtrife ceaſ-"eth."§

Fifthly. You bear falſe witneſs againſt your neighbour in a manner peculiarly blamable and dangerous, when you affirm or inſinuate any thing falſe concerning the Governours of your Country; or draw unfair concluſions from that which is true. "Thou ſhalt not ſpeak "evil of the rulers of thy people."‖ A ſlander

* Prov. xxvi. 22. † Prov. xvii. 14.
‡ James iii. 5, 6. § Prov. xxvi. 20.
‖ Acts xxiii. 5. Exod. xxii. 28.

upon a private perſon is an injury to himſelf and family: but a ſlander upon the managers of public affairs, and an unjuſt interpretation of their meaſures, may be an injury to a kingdom: it may endanger the life and property of every man and family in it: eſpecially whenever an Enemy abroad, and Traitors at home, are labouring to overturn our laws and liberties.

Sixthly. You may perhaps be tempted to bear falſe witneſs in Favour of your neighbour, whether preſent or abſent: but no falſe witneſs is innocent. Moreover, your falſeneſs in favour of one, may in many circumſtances be unjuſt to another. It may poſſibly injure the very perſon himſelf, by hiding his fault from him, and preventing his amendment.

Falſe witneſs of every kind and degree brings evil upon the perſon who offers it. Falſe evidence given in a court of juſtice renders him infamous and puniſhable. Scandal delivered in common converſation makes him diſliked and ſuſpected: it weakens the affection of his friends: it raiſes him enemies, who will ſpeak little of his virtues, and report his faults with aggravation. Miſrepreſentation even in favour of the abſent, or in flattery to the preſent,

as it impeaches his ſincerity, will of courſe impair his credit.

As it is always a ſin, on any occaſion, or in any manner, "to bear Falſe witneſs againſt "your neighbour;" ſo is it ſome times your duty, how painful ſoever it may be, to bear True witneſs againſt him.

Firſt. In a court of juſtice, or before a magiſtrate; when you are lawfully ſummoned, or when your regard for juſtice and the public good require your attendance.

Secondly. In ordinary converſation. It may happen that you cannot do juſtice to one perſon without ſpeaking unfavourably of the opinions, behaviour, or character, of another, who hath borne falſe witneſs againſt him. This caſe reſembles one before mentioned of reſcuing a perſon from a murderer:* reſcue him, if it be poſſible, without bloodſhed; if it be not poſſible, the blood of the murderer is on his own head: defend an innocent character, if it be poſſible, without ſeverity on the ſlanderer; if it be not poſſible, this ſeverity is his proper recompenſe; "he loved not bleſſing, "therefore it is far from him."†

* Sermon ix. † Pſalm cix. 16.

Thirdly. Vice ought never to be mentioned with lightneſs or extenuation. When ſpoken of at all, it is to be ſpoken of with ſerioufneſs and cenſure. This is a duty which we owe to truth and virtue, to religion and the public good. We offend againſt all theſe, when we give a ſoft name to any wickedneſs. "Wo unto "them that call evil good, and good evil; "that put darkneſs for light, and light for "darkneſs; that put bitter for ſweet, and ſweet "for bitter;"* confounding the diſtinction between vice and virtue; miſleading the underſtanding of their hearers; corrupting their hearts; and undermining the foundation of all chriſtian behaviour. If, therefore, we have occaſion to ſpeak of a vicious perſon, all the charity that we can ſhew him is to be ſilent concerning his vices. There may be caſes wherein even this ſilence is not allowable; becauſe a greater charity may demand the diſcloſure of his character; as, in converſation with any to whom his example and influence may be hurtful; or who may be likely to enter into any near engagements with him.

Fourthly. You are obliged to bear true witneſs againſt your neighbour, when you cannot perform your duty towards him, without

* Iſaiah v. 20.

noticing to himſelf ſome error in his opinions or behaviour. This depends upon your relation to him. It is the duty of a Miniſter, for example, to admoniſh his pariſhioners: he is "to be inſtant" at all "ſeaſons; to reprove, "rebuke, exhort, with all long ſuffering and "doctrine."* A parent owes the ſame duty to a child: a teacher to a ſcholar: a maſter or a miſtreſs to a ſervant: a friend to a friend. In every caſe the advice is to be given with kindneſs, and in a manner ſuitable to the relation and occaſion.

IN ALL your converſation govern your tongue by the laws of TRUTH and CHARITY.

"Putting away lying, ſpeak every man "TRUTH with his neighbour." Falſehood is a diſhonour to our nature. An Evil Spirit brought it into the world,† and ſin and death followed it.‡ As it originally cauſed all the miſeries of this mortal ſtate, ſo doth it daily multiply and aggravate them. By falſehood, the innocent are betrayed into guilt, and the guilty are ſcreened from puniſhment. By falſehood, virtue is diſhonoured, and vice gloſſed over. By

* 2 Tim. iv. 2. † Gen. iii. 4, 5. ‡ Gen. iii. 13, 19.

falſehood, unjuſt bargains are made in the markets, and ſupported in courts of juſtice. By falſehood, quarrels are begun and inflamed, and the peace of families and neighbourhoods is deſtroyed. Every wiſe father, therefore, will ſay to his child in the words of Solomon; "My ſon, let not TRUTH forſake thee: bind it "about thy neck: write it upon the table of "thine heart:"* let it rule thy outward behaviour, and thy inward thoughts. Every good maſter will ſpeak to his ſervant in the language of David: "there ſhall no DECEITFUL perſon "dwell in my houſe: he that telleth LIES "ſhall not tarry in my ſight."† A child who abhors and deſpiſes a lie, will obſerve the command of his parents with equal exactneſs, whether preſent or abſent: for he well knows that he ſhall not add to the ſin of diſobedience, the ſin of denying it. Servants, who dread and hate a lie, will not injure their maſter: for they conſider that truth will oblige them to confeſs their crime. They will guard his property, "not with eye-ſervice as pleaſers of "men only," and deceivers of them; "but "with ſingleneſs of heart, as the ſervants of "Chriſt, fearing GOD."‡

* Prov. iii. 3. † Pſal. ci. 10. ‡ Coloſſ. iii. 22. Eph. vi. 6.

Speak every man truth with his neighbour, "for we are members one of another;" partakers of the ſame reaſonable nature; and alſo joined together, like the limbs of a body, as fellow members of the Chriſtian Church. GOD hath given us ſpeech that we may make known our thoughts to each other, for the comfort and benefit of all. If by ſpeech we conceal the thought which we have, and convey a thought which we have not, how wickedly do we abuſe the gift of GOD, and change the good which he intended us into evil!

As lying firſt ſprung from an Evil Spirit, and proceedeth continually from an evil heart, ſo doth it lead to every evil work; no one who begins this wicked courſe, can tell where he ſhall ſtop. The words of our bleſſed Lord are an awful warning to them who have once ſtept into "the way of lying."* "Ye are of "your father the Devil; and the luſt of your "father ye will do. He was a murderer from "the beginning, and abode not in the truth, "becauſe there is no truth in him. When he "ſpeaketh a lie, he ſpeaketh of his own: for "he is a liar, and the father of lying."†

* Pſal. cxix. 29. † John viii. 44.

Speak every man with his neighbour according to CHARITY. Speeches are often as hurtful as actions. As you would not injure your neighbour by deed, ſo injure him not by word. You would not take away any of his goods: diminiſh not his reputation. I believe there are many who reſpect the property of others, but forget the reverence due to their good name; and while they deſpiſe a theft, will condeſcend to a ſcandal. But Charity is juſt in every point; and not only juſt, but kind. In proportion as it abhors wickedneſs, it is cautious of imputing it, in the very ſmalleſt degree, where it is not: and where it is, while it ſpeaks with ſeverity of the ſin, makes all due allowance for the ſinner.

Charity follows after PEACE; agreeably to the advice of the Apoſtle, "if it be poſſible, as "much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all "men."* He ſeems to ſay that it is not always poſſible: ſuch is our weakneſs and folly. The difficulty of the purſuit is an argument for your care: and a principal part of your care will lie in the government of the Tongue. Every day does not offer a temptation, or occaſion, for unkind actions; but unkind words

* Rom. xii. 18.

may be the produce of any hour. How often do they ſpring out of innocent and cheerful converſation! from inquiries after truth! and even from the love of virtue! How much oftener do they ariſe from perverſeneſs of mind, and peeviſhneſs of temper! oftener ſtill, from debauch and drunkenneſs! ending in actions moſt unkind, and events moſt dreadful!

In order to govern the tongue, "keep the "HEART, or MIND, with all diligence;"* for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth "ſpeaketh."† If the tongue be an unruly member, it is becauſe the mind hath not learned to govern it: if it "pour forth bitter "waters,"‡ it is becauſe the heart is not pure. If thou bear falſe witneſs againſt thy neighbour, in a court, or in a chamber; if thou cenſure him untruly, or unneceſſarily; if thou fail to adviſe him for his good, ſtill worſe, if thou lead him into evil; if thou ſpeak not on all occaſions in favour of religion, and virtue, and civil obedience; if, on the contrary, thou "make a mock at impiety and ſin,"§ and invite men to diſorder and ſedition; in all theſe caſes, the poiſon indeed is on the tongue, but

* Prov. iv. 23.
† Matth. xii. 34.
‡ James iii. 11.
§ Prov. xiv. 3.

the ſource is in a corrupted heart: and therefore, with perfect equity, "for theſe idle and "evil words," evil in themſelves, in their cauſe, and in their conſequences, "thou ſhalt "ſurely give an account in the day of judg-"ment."*

* Matth. xii. 36.

SERMON XIII.

ON THE COMMANDMENTS---X.

MATTHEW XV. 19.

OUT OF THE HEART PROCEED EVIL THOUGHTS, MURDERS, ADULTERIES, FORNICATIONS, THEFTS, FALSE WITNESS, BLASPHEMIES.

"KEEP thy heart with all diligence; for out "of it are the iſſues of life."* By "the "heart" the Sacred Writer means the mind. As the blood, which preſerves the natural life, iſſues from the heart; ſo do the thoughts, which preſerve the religious life, iſſue from the mind. Good thoughts, by the grace of GOD, ariſe in the mind. If encouraged, they produce good deſires; and good deſires produce good words, and good actions: and good thoughts, good deſires, good words, and good actions, conſtitute a Religious Life. Evil thoughts alſo, by the corruption of our nature, and the ſuggeſtion of the Devil, ariſe in the mind. If encouraged, they produce evil deſires; and evil deſires produce evil words, and evil actions; and any of

* PROV. iv. 23.

theſe deſtroy a religious life. Wiſely therefore did Solomon warn you "to keep your heart "with all diligence." Graciouſly did He "who is greater than Solomon,"* promiſe the higheſt bleſſedneſs to "the pure in heart;"† and guard you againſt polluting it with EVIL THOUGHTS, by the mournful catalogue of the ſins which may follow them; namely, "mur-"ders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, falſe "witneſs, blaſphemies." Evil thoughts produce offences againſt every Commandment. When men ſuffer their minds to harbour evil thoughts concerning GOD, they neglect his worſhip, or corrupt it; they take his name in vain; they profane his ſabbath; and, failing in reverence to their heavenly father, pay no honour to their earthly parents. When men ſuffer their minds to harbour evil thoughts concerning their Neighbour, they do not reſpect his property, his good name, his family happineſs, or even his life.

Theſe evil thoughts concerning our neighbour, and the evil deſires which flow from them, are eſpecially forbidden in the Tenth Commandment. "Thou ſhalt not covet thy "neighbour's houſe; thou ſhalt not covet thy

* Matth. xii. 42. † Matth. v. 8.

" neighbour's wife; nor his man-ſervant, nor " his maid-ſervant, nor his ox, nor his aſs, " nor any thing that is his." This commandment enjoins that uprightneſs and purity in heart, which leads to juſtice and charity in behaviour; and guards us againſt all temptation to the ſins forbidden in the ſixth, ſeventh, eighth, and ninth, commandments.

The Firſt offence againſt this commandment, is to deſire any thing belonging to our neighbour, which he cannot lawfully grant. " Thou ſhalt not covet thy neighbour's wife." This is a deſire, wicked in itſelf, and dreadful in its conſequences. It leads to crime and miſery. It hurried David to adultery and murder. It brought upon him the anguiſh of an accuſing conſcience, and the judgments of an avenging providence.* " Every night he " waſhed his bed, and watered his couch, with " his tears."† His favourite Son raiſed his rebellious arm againſt him; and " the ſword " never departed from his houſe." It has drawn many in later days to like tranſgreſſion, and the peril of greater puniſhment. Although the offender may not " ſlay his injured " neighbour with the ſword," yet he de-

* 2 Sam. xi. and xii. † Pſal. vi. 6.

ſtroys the happineſs of his life: and although he may eſcape worldly calamity, he is in the number of thoſe whom "God will judge."*

The Second offence againſt this commandment, is to deſire any thing belonging to your neighbour, which he is permitted, but not willing, to grant. "Thou ſhalt not covet thy "neighbour's houſe, nor his man-ſervant, nor "his maid-ſervant, nor his ox, nor his aſs, "nor any thing that is his."

Thou ſhalt not deſire, without his entire conſent, "his houſe," or his land. This is an evil deſire, which produces certain diſquiet, and leads to crime and puniſhment. It made Ahab wretched in the midſt of power and plenty.† It tempted him to falſe witneſs, robbery, and murder. It brought upon him the ſentence of GOD: "as dogs licked the "blood of Naboth, ſo ſhall dogs lick thy "blood, even thine." It draws men in every ſituation to over-reaching and oppreſſion.

"Nor his man-ſervant, nor his maid-ſervant." Men-ſervants and maid-ſervants, in ancient times, were generally ſlaves, the property of the maſter; bought and ſold like cattle: in ſome few countries they are ſo now. As, in ſuch times and

* Heb. xiii. 4. † 1 Kings xxi.

countries, it was unlawful to desire the man-servant or maid-servant of a neighbour without his entire consent, because they were his property; so in these better times and this happier country, it is unlawful to desire them, because they have, in consideration of wages and maintenance, engaged themselves to him for a certain time. When that time is expired, it is not fair or honourable to desire them, until the Master or Mistress and Servant have resolved not to renew their engagements. For the present Master or Mistress has the fairest claim to the first offer of a servant's future assistance; and servants are more happy and prosperous, when they continue many years in the same family.

"Nor his Ox, nor his Ass, nor any thing "that is his." In ancient times, cattle of every kind were a principal part of a man's possessions. Certain cattle are therefore mentioned, as familiar instances: and all other property, whether great or small, considerable or trifling, are stated under the universal description, "any "thing that is his." As any thing, however small, is not to be stolen, so neither is it to be desired without the free consent of the possessor.

The Third offence againſt this commandment is, to deſire the property of your neighbour, which he is permitted and willing to grant; but to deſire it on unlawful or unreaſonable conditions. Exchange of property, whether it be lands or houſes, or other poſſeſſions, whether obtained by inheritance, or acquired by induſtry, contributes to the happineſs and comfort of human life: and no man makes any of theſe exchanges with his neighbour, without firſt deſiring his property. The honeſt man deſires to have it at its reputed worth: the diſhoneſt man deſires to have it for leſs than its worth, or for nothing; and this evil deſire leads him into fraud or theft.

The Fourth offence againſt this commandment, the parent and the companion of the three above mentioned, is Diſcontent. If you ſuffer your mind to harbour evil thoughts concerning your Condition, you will be tempted to admit like evil thoughts concerning God, who placed you in it. You will perhaps murmur againſt his providence; be unthankful for his goodneſs; diſobedient to his will in general, and inattentive to the duties of your calling in particular. Theſe evil thoughts concerning your condition, having led you aſtray from your duty

to GOD, will probably draw you from your duty to your Neighbour. Diſſatisfaction in your own ſtate and poſſeſſions, may produce an evil deſire of his. This evil deſire may tempt you to queſtion his merits, to ſpeak unkindly of his character, or even to invade his property.

Let every one therefore be content with his own condition. Let him improve it daily by all fair and reaſonable means; by induſtry, or ingenuity; by profeſſion, trade, or huſbandry. But let him be content with his honeſt gains: let him be ſatisfied with his own lot: let him enjoy, with thankfulneſs, his own things, and not look with envy on the things of another. He that ſaid "thou ſhalt not ſteal," ſaid alſo "thou ſhalt not covet." GOD, who knoweth our weakneſs, doth, in his wiſdom and goodneſs, guard us againſt the greater ſin, by forbidding the leſs, which leads to it; and teaches us to ſecure the cleanneſs of the hand, by the purity of the heart. It is this evil coveting after the goods of others, that makes men bad Subjects and bad Citizens, reſtleſs and ſeditious, friends to new ſchemes of government, and new allotments of property; wherein, under the pretence of law, and

by the force of arms, they may poſſeſs "their "neighbour's houſe, and his ox, and his aſs, "and every thing that is his." Theſe effects of Diſcontent are not imaginary: they have exiſted, and do exiſt, in other countries; wherein, the Evil Deſires and conſequent wickedneſs of a few, not being over-ruled (as they are here) by the good ſenſe and virtue of the many, all liberty and property is overthrown; all worldly happineſs is loſt; contentment is become indeed a hard leſſon, and little is left for the Wretched Sufferers, but patience and reſignation. Being become the ſubjects and ſlaves of this uſurpation and miſ-rule, they are made the inſtruments of invaſion and tyranny againſt the liberties, lives, and fortunes, of others. Torn by force from their dwellings, their friends, and families, they are driven to the field of battle; equally compelled to fight, againſt their fellow-citizens and foreign nations, againſt Allies and Enemies, againſt Monarchies and Republics, againſt people of every Religion and every Country.

Let us guard our hearts againſt the firſt motions of this evil ſpirit of DISCONTENT; which, like the Great Deceiver in the Garden of Eden, promiſing a wonderful increaſe of

knowledge, and liberty, and happineſs, leads its deluded votaries to infatuation, ſlavery, and miſery. Had our firſt Parents known the true hiſtory of Moral Diſobedience and Irreligion, its paſt effects upon the Tempter, and its future effects on themſelves and their poſterity, they would not have been "beguiled by his "ſubtilty."* We who live at this day DO know the true hiſtory of Civil Rebellion and Revolution: every Engliſhman has heard of the evils which flow, in other countries, from Sedition and Republican Tyranny: he will pray to GOD that he, his family, and poſterity, may never feel them. Let us therefore be "con-"tent with ſuch things as we have,"† as a nation, and as individuals. In every ſituation let us beware of Coveting: "a man's life and "comfort conſiſt not in the abundance of the "things which he poſſeſſes."‡ A perpetual ſeeking after more, deſtroys all the enjoyment of that which we have: it begins with diſquiet, it leads to ſin, and ends in miſery.

* 2 Cor. xi. 3. † Heb. xiii. 5.
‡ Luke xii. 15.

SERMON XIV.

ON PRAYER.

I THESSALONIANS V. 17.
PRAY WITHOUT CEASING.

PRAYER is an humble addreſs to GOD, the all-perfect creator of all things. It is a duty of all his reaſonable creatures. It is commanded by him in the Holy Bible. It is recommended by the example of good men in all ages. It is an eſpecial duty of the diſciples of Jeſus. Every doctrine of our religion, and every habit of our chriſtian life, concur in ſhewing the propriety and neceſſity of Prayer.

We live under a conſtant ſenſe of the Preſence and Providence of GOD. He is in every place throughout the whole compaſs of heaven and earth. He is "about our bed" by night, and "about our path" by day, and ſpieth out "all our ways."* He hath called us into life,

* Pſal. cxxxix. 2.

he preſerveth us in it, and will call us out of it; and all which hath hitherto befallen us, or ſhall hereafter befall us, whether in life, or death, or eternity, dependeth upon his good pleaſure. We think continually of the Divine Perfections. We are perſuaded that all the happineſs which we enjoy or expect, flows from the Goodneſs of God. We are convinced that we and all mankind have ſinned; and that all the miſery which we feel or fear, flow from the Juſtice of God. We believe that all our hopes of pardon reſt on the Mercy of God through Jeſus Chriſt; which mercy is offered to us on the condition of our repentance and amendment; and we are aſſured that our ability to repent and amend comes from the Holy Spirit, aſſiſting our endeavours. With the Pſalmiſt, "we ſet God always before us,"* as our maker, preſerver, and governour; "a re-" warder of them who diligently ſeek him;"† a puniſher of them who diſregard him; merciful to forgive our repented and forſaken ſins; gracious to accept our ſincere endeavours, and bountiful to reward them. This is our chriſtian faith and practice.

We ſhall therefore look up continually to

* Pſal. xvi. 9. † Heb. ii. 6.

GOD with Adoration of his perfections; with Confeſſion of our ſins; with Thankſgiving for all the bleſſings which we have received; with Supplication for bleſſings yet to come. We ſhall, in a word, "pray without ceaſing." Our mind will always be devout: and it will from time to time be employed in PIOUS MEDITATION, SHORT EJACULATION, or SOLEMN PRAYER.

Pious Meditation is a ſerious thinking of GOD, our duty towards him, our dependence on him, and our proſpects in a world to come. This preſent world employs much of your thoughts, becauſe your preſent buſineſs and pleaſure is in it: but this buſineſs is to be conducted, and this pleaſure is to be enjoyed, agreeably to the divine will. GOD, therefore, and your duty towards him, ought to be continually in your thoughts. The other world is cloſe to you, although unſeen; it is hid from your ſight, only by your mortal body: this frail partition will ſoon fall down, and lay it open to your view. Is it not reaſonable, therefore, to inquire continually what is likely to be your portion in this new world? to conſider how you have reverenced and obeyed the Sovereign Diſpoſer; who will give to every one his place in it, according to his works? You

ſee the propriety and advantage of Pious Meditation. It preſents to your mind the higheſt object, GOD; the moſt important leſſon, your duty to him; the greateſt intereſt, your portion in a world to come.

Ejaculation is a ſhort prayer, offered in thought only, or with words. Prayer is ſo natural to our minds, that every object and event around us leads us to it. If we look to the heavens above, or to the earth below, how naturally do we think, or ſay, "O Lord, how ma-"nifold are thy works! in wiſdom haſt thou "made them all! the earth is full of thy "riches!"* When we are alarmed by the fear of any evil thing, how inſtantly do we fly to GOD for protection, and ſay, "Lord ſave us!" "Lord have mercy upon us!" When we wiſh for any good thing, "GOD grant it!" When we poſſeſs and enjoy it, "GOD be "praiſed!"

Pious Meditation increaſes this natural diſpoſition of the mind to prayer, and leads it to frequent Ejaculations. The more we think of GOD, the more inclined we ſhall be to adore his perfections. The more we recollect our ſins and infirmities, the more humbly and ear-

* Pſal. civ. 24.

neſtly ſhall we implore his pardon. The more we reflect upon our obligations to him, the more heartily ſhall we give him thanks. The more we contemplate our dependence upon him in this world and the world to come, the more devoutly ſhall we beg his protection and favour.

Solemn Prayer is a longer prayer, offered in a form of words, and in an humble poſture of body. The words may be your own, put together at the time, or deliberately compoſed by you before hand; or they may be compoſed by others. As few perſons are able to frame a prayer, and fewer to do it properly on a ſudden, it is generally expedient to uſe ſuch forms of prayer as are compoſed by others. Our bleſſed Lord has given us one, with which no other is to be compared. Many, and excellent, are in our Book of Common Prayer; and many others, in our books of religious inſtruction and devotion.

Solemn prayer is offered by yourſelves alone, and with your family, and with your neighbours in the Church. In either caſe, it may be offered at any ſeaſon: but men have in all ages allotted to it ſtated times. In the choice of thoſe times they have been guided by the following conſiderations: namely, by the courſe

of nature; by the command of GOD; by the remembrance of ſome ſpecial mercies; and laſtly, in conformity to theſe reaſons, by the laws of their country.

Firſt. Men have been directed in their choice of the time of prayer by the courſe of nature. Day and night is a diviſion of our time, ſtriking and unceaſing. This diviſion is marked out to us by Him, who placed "the ſun in "the heavens to rule the day, and the moon "and the ſtars to govern the night."* The opening of every day preſents the world to us anew; and is therefore a natural call upon us to worſhip the maker of it. Every awakening from ſleep, is a ſort of renewal of life and reaſon; and incites us, therefore, to adore the giver of them. The cloſing of every day withdraws the world from our view; and ſleep very much reſembles our departure out of it. Both circumſtances, therefore, naturally invite us to adore the Almighty Governour of this world and the world to come; the giver and diſpoſer of our being in every ſtate. "In the "morning and in the evening," ſays the Holy Pſalmiſt, "will I pray. I will make my prayer "unto the GOD of my life."†

* Pſalm cxxxvi. 8, 9. † Pſal. lv. 18. and xlii. 19.

And how can any thinking perſon fail to imitate him? How can he riſe from his bed, without expreſſing his thankfulneſs to GOD, for the ſafety and refreſhment of the night paſt, and for being raiſed again from ſleep, the image of death? How can he behold the ſun return, to enlighten, comfort, and ſupport, the inhabitants of the earth; and not praiſe the almighty and gracious power, which keeps him in his daily courſe? How can he enter upon a new day, without imploring GOD to bleſs his labours and employments in it; and to preſerve him through it, from bodily harm and from wickedneſs? In like manner, how can any ſerious perſon lie down to ſleep, without conſidering that poſſibly he may awake no more in this world? Will he not, therefore, confeſs his faults to GOD? implore his pardon? thank him for the bleſſings of the day paſt? beg his protection through the perils of the night, and commit himſelf to his good providence, for the remainder of his time in this world, and for his eternal ſtate in the next? I am perſuaded, that you all ſee the propriety, and feel the weight, of theſe conſiderations; and, I truſt, that you reſolve never to open your eyes in the morning, or cloſe

them at night, without Solemn Prayer to GOD.

Theſe daily prayers ſhould never be omitted. You ſhould make it a point of conſcience, a habit invariable, never to go out of your houſe, or enter upon buſineſs in it, before you have ſaid your morning prayer; never to lie down to reſt, until you have performed your evening worſhip; never to enter upon the dangers which ſurround you in the day and in the night, without delivering yourſelves up, by prayer, in to the hands of the Almighty.

"In the morning, and in the evening, and "at Noon day, will I pray;"* not only when the ſun is riſen, and when he is ſet, but alſo when he has half meaſured his daily courſe. This was the goodly cuſtom of David, and Daniel, and other holy perſons† in every age. It well deſerves the imitation of good Chriſtians. They who have leiſure may offer a ſolemn prayer; and they who are full of buſineſs, may offer, at leaſt, an ejaculation.

Secondly. Men have been directed in their choice of the time of prayer by the command of GOD. At the creation GOD bleſſed the ſeventh day, and ſanctified it. In the Fourth

* Pſal. lv. 18. † Daniel vi. 10. Acts x. 9.

Commandment he enjoins us to keep holy the ſeventh day. Our Lord and his Apoſtles kept it holy. One neceſſary part of this ſanctification, or keeping holy, of the ſeventh day, is to devote it to ſolemn prayer.

Thirdly. Men are directed in their choice of the time of prayer, by the remembrance of ſome ſpecial mercies. It is natural to obſerve the yearly return of any day, on which you have received a benefit. Thus private perſons celebrate the day of their birth, or their marriage, or the birth of a child. Thus the Jewiſh nation kept the paſſover, as a remembrance of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Chriſtian nations, for higher reaſons, obſerve the day on which our Saviour came into the world; the day on which he died for us; the day on which he roſe again; and alſo the day in which he aſcended into heaven. For the ſame reaſon they celebrate certain other days, in remembrance of the Apoſtles and Martyrs; who ſpent their lives in preaching the Goſpel, or died to bear witneſs to it. All theſe days are kept holy by ſolemn prayer.

Fourthly. Men are directed in their choice of the time of prayer by the laws of their country. All Chriſtian nations enjoin the ob-

ſervance of the Lord's Day, in obedience to the law of Scripture. They alſo command the obſervance of the other holy days above mentioned, for the reaſon and propriety of the thing, from the example of Chriſtians in all ages, and for the furtherance of true religion and virtuous behaviour. To theſe, the wiſdom and piety of our Government add occaſionally days of public humiliation or thankſgiving, for calamities or bleſſings. All theſe days are diſtinguiſhed by public worſhip, and exhortation to private prayer.

Parents, and Maſters and Miſtreſſes of Schools and Families, have a particular duty with reſpect to ſolemn prayer. They are bound to offer up daily prayer with their children, ſcholars, and ſervants. How becoming and comfortable is it, to ſee the Head of a Family, daily united with every member of it in prayer to the Almighty! This religious practice is a perpetual acknowledgment of the providence of GOD over his houſe. It is a daily renewal of his vows of chriſtian faith and obedience: "as for me and my houſe, we will ſerve the "Lord."* It is a conſtant leſſon of piety to his children, ſcholars, and ſervants. I will

* Joſhua xxiv. 15.

preſume to ſay, that every family, parent, maſter, miſtreſs, children, ſcholars, relations, ſervants, whatever may be their attainments in religion, or their habits of virtue, will become more worthy in every reſpect, better members of their family, neighbourhood, and country, and more likely to perſevere in their duties to the end of life, if they daily aſſemble together in Family Prayer. If every family did ſo aſſemble, how many ſeeds of virtue would be cheriſhed! how many budding vices would be nipped! how many temptations would be prevented! how large would be the increaſe of piety, morality, and order! How acceptable to the Almighty would be theſe daily offerings of prayer and praiſe! aſcending together to the throne of grace, "like the "ſound of many waters,"* "and like the in-"cenſe of the evening ſacrifice!"† would they not draw down bleſſings temporal, as well as ſpiritual, on the inhabitants of this favoured country?

Daily prayer is an incentive, and a guard, to daily virtue. Can I adore my Creator, and immediately offend him? Can I confeſs my ſins unto him, and inſtantly repeat them? Can

* See Revelation xix. 6. † Pſal. cxli. 2.

I offer my thanks or my ſupplications for his bleſſings, and in the next hour abuſe them? Can I kneel down with my family to the gracious Father of the univerſe, and riſe up an unkind huſband, a careleſs parent, or an unreaſonable maſter?

I do not ſee how any conſiderate perſon can neglect theſe offerings of private, family, and public Prayer. Can you live without thinking of GOD, your duty towards him, the bleſſings which you receive from him, your dependence upon him, and your portion in a life to come? Can you meditate upon theſe high and important ſubjects, and not lift up your eyes to heaven, with Adoration of the divine perfections, Confeſſion of your ſins, Thankſgiving for mercies paſt, and Supplication for good things to come? Can you confine theſe movements of your ſoul to ſhort Ejaculations? or will you not give them utterance in Solemn Prayer? Will not every occaſion be welcome to you, which calls you to this act of reverence to your heavenly Father? Will you not kneel down, morning and evening, in your chamber? Will you not daily worſhip with your family? Will you not be "glad when your neighbours ſay

" unto you, we will go into the houſe of the " Lord?"*

Prayer is the natural addreſs of a creature to his Creator; of a child to his heavenly Father; of a ſubject to his almighty Lord. It is the proper offering of a ſinner to his offended Lawgiver; of a repenting ſinner to his forgiving Judge. It is a due tribute of humble gratitude to the Giver of all good. It is a juſt expreſſion of hopeful dependence upon his future bounty. It is the nobleſt employment of man on earth: it will be the eternal engagement of bleſſed ſpirits in heaven.

* Pſal. cxxii. 1.

SERMON XV.

ON PRAYER---THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATTH. VI. 9.

AFTER THIS MANNER PRAY YE.

OUR bleſſed Saviour hath given us a form of prayer, which we conſtantly uſe in obedience to his commands. In remembrance of the Divine Giver, we call it the LORD'S PRAYER.

This prayer conſiſts of eight parts: namely, the beginning; ſix petitions; the concluſion.

The beginning is an humble addreſs to GOD. "Our father which art in heaven."

GOD is "our father," as being our Creator: we are his children, as being his creatures. We are his Undutiful children, and unworthy to call him father: but he is pleaſed to receive us for the ſake of his ſon, Jeſus Chriſt. We ſay "Our" father, as praying, not every one alone, and for himſelf only, but with, and for, all

mankind. We add, "which art in heaven." GOD is preſent every where. We mortals upon earth ſee him not: but he manifeſts his preſence to the bleſſed inhabitants of heaven. "The heaven is his Throne, and the earth is "his footſtool."* When we ſay, our father "which art in heaven," we are reminded, firſt, of the majeſty of GOD, which moves us to pray with humility of ſoul and body;† ſecondly, of his wiſdom, which knows our wants; thirdly, of his power, which enables him to ſupply them; fourthly, of his goodneſs, which inclines him to ſupply them. Addreſſing him by this comprehenſive title, "our father which "art in heaven," we truſt that he will grant whatever he ſees beſt for us. "If we being evil," defective in wiſdom, power, and goodneſs, "know how to give good gifts unto our chil-"dren, how much more ſhall our father which "is in heaven give good things to them that "aſk him?"‡

The Firſt petition is, "hallowed be thy "name." "Hallowed" ſignifies, reverenced as holy. By the "name of GOD," we are to underſtand GOD himſelf; his perfections; his

* Iſaiah lxvi. 1. † See Eccleſ. v. 2.

‡ Matth. vii. 11.

name; his word; every thing which is dedicated to him, whether times, or places, or things. The meaning, therefore, of the petition is; "we pray, O GOD, that all holy reve-
" rence be ever paid to thee, thy name, thy
" word, thy laws, thy ſabbath, church, and
" worſhip."

The Second petition is, "thy kingdom
" come." By the kingdom of GOD is meant, firſt, his kingdom of Grace; his government of all chriſtians here, under the laws and promiſes of the Goſpel, in a ſtate of trial and imperfect happineſs: ſecondly, his kingdom of Glory; his government of all good perſons hereafter, under the rewards of the Goſpel, in a ſtate of confirmed holineſs and perfect happineſs. In this petition, therefore, we pray to GOD, that his kingdom of Grace may be enlarged, or, that chriſtian faith and practice may increaſe among us, and prevail among all people: that his kingdom of Glory may, in his due time, begin; and that we may, by his mercy through Chriſt, be received into it.

The Third petition is, "thy will be done in
" earth, as it is in heaven." In theſe words we pray, that we, and all mankind, may conſtantly obey the will of GOD declared in his

holy word, and in the law which he hath written in our hearts;* and that we may cheerfully acquieſce in his will, as manifeſted to us by the events of his providence; that ſo the will of GOD may be performed and ſubmitted to by men on earth, with the ſame readineſs, ſincerity, and conſtancy, as it is by the Angels in heaven.

The Fourth petition is, "give us this day "our daily bread." In theſe words we pray, that GOD will ſo bleſs our worldly labours, and the earthly goods which he hath given us, that we may have, from day to day, whatever is neceſſary and convenient for the ſuſtenance and comfort of our bodies; and alſo that he will ſo bleſs our ſpiritual exerciſes, (as prayer, the reading and hearing of his word, and the receiving of the Lord's Supper) that we may have, from day to day, ſuch a meaſure of inſtruction and divine aſſiſtance, as is needful for the performance of our chriſtian duty, and the eternal welfare of our ſouls.

The Fifth petition is, "forgive us our treſpaſ-"ſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us." In theſe words we pray, that GOD will be pleaſed to forgive us our ſins, whereby we

* Rom. ii. 15.

treſpaſs againſt, or offend, him: we pray for his forgiveneſs, under this condition, that we forgive all perſons who treſpaſs againſt, or offend, us. By this petition we are reminded, that, "if we forgive men their treſpaſſes, our "heavenly father will," upon our repentance and amendment, for the ſake of his ſon Jeſus Chriſt, "forgive us our treſpaſſes; but if we "do not forgive men their treſpaſſes, our "heavenly father will not forgive us our treſ-"paſſes;"* and therefore, that forgiveneſs of injuries, is a chriſtian duty, neceſſary for the obtaining of pardon of our ſins, and to the rendering of our prayers acceptable to GOD.

The Sixth petition is, "lead us not into "temptation, but deliver us from evil." In theſe words we pray, that GOD will be pleaſed to preſerve us from every condition or ſituation, which may tempt us to ſin; or, if he ſhould ſuffer us to fall into any ſuch condition or ſituation, that he will enable us by his grace to eſcape the temptation:† that ſo he will deliver and preſerve us from all evil; from the evil one, the Devil; from the evil of ſin; and from the evil of puniſhment.

The Concluſion is uſually called the Doxo-

* Matth. vi. 9—15. † See 1 Cor. x. 13.

logy, that is, the form of giving glory to God: "for thine is the kingdom, and the power, "and the glory, for ever and ever." In these words we acknowledge, that to God belongs the supreme dominion over all things; that he has almighty power; that his perfections demand our deepest reverence; and therefore, as we are bound to pray to him for all that we want, so are we obliged to praise him for all that we receive; and to give him due honour, by declaring his perfections, which have existed from all eternity, and will exist for ever and ever.

To the prayer is added Amen, which signifies "so it is," or "so be it." When, therefore, we say Amen, we repeat in heart and mind the substance of the prayer; we declare our hope that God will graciously hear us; and we again acknowledge his perfections.

The chief parts of this divine prayer are well explained in the Catechism.

"I desire my Lord God, our heavenly father, who is the giver of all goodness, [our father which art in heaven:] to send his grace unto me and to all people, that we may worship him, serve him, and obey him, as we ought to do: [Hallowed be thy name: thy

kingdom come: thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.] And I pray unto GOD that he will ſend us all things that be needful both for our ſouls and bodies: [give us this day our daily bread.] And that he will be merciful unto us, and forgive us our ſins: [forgive us our treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us.] And that it will pleaſe him to ſave and defend us from all dangers ghoſtly and bodily; and that he will keep us from all ſin and wickedneſs, and from our ghoſtly enemy, and from everlaſting death: [lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.] And this I truſt he will do of his infinite mercy and goodneſs through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and therefore I ſay, Amen, ſo be it."

Thus we pray, that GOD may be honoured and glorified by us, and all the reaſonable creatures which he hath made: that his Goſpel may be believed and practiſed by all people; and may bring them in his due time to his heavenly kingdom: that we may obey his laws, and ſubmit to his providence, as do the Angels above: that he will give food to our bodies, and grace to our ſouls: that he will forgive us our ſins, if we forgive each other: that he will preſerve us from temptation, or enable us to reſiſt it;

and deliver us from the Devil, from ſin, and from everlaſting miſery. We humbly pray to him for theſe bleſſings, becauſe we are under his government, under the control of his power, under the protection of his goodneſs, and under every obligation to obey and honour him, now and ever.

In this form of prayer, our bleſſed Lord makes no mention of himſelf. But he inſtructed his diſciples, that, after a certain ſeaſon, they ſhould pray to the Father in his name. "Hitherto ye have aſked nothing in my name. "At that day ye ſhall aſk in my name."* "Hitherto, while I am among you, as your "Lord and Teacher† upon earth, ye have "aſked nothing in my name: but at that day, "when, as your Saviour and High Prieſt, I "ſhall have offered myſelf a ſacrifice for you; "when I ſhall have ſent to you the Holy Spi-"rit, and, as your Mediator, I ſhall have ſat "down at the right hand of the Father; then "ye ſhall aſk in my name." We, therefore, offer up our prayers in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Upon his atonement and medi-

* John xvi. 24, 26. † John xiii. 13.

ation we depend, for the acceptance of our prayers, and of every other act of our imperfect obedience.

THE matter of our prayers may be conveniently divided into four kinds: Adoration, Confeſſion, Thankſgiving, Supplication.

Adoration is our humble addreſs to GOD, with an acknowledgment of his perfections, and his dominion over us. Thus begins the divine pattern, "Our father which art in "heaven:" and thus alſo it concludes, "for "thine is the kingdom, and the power, "and the glory, for ever and ever." Moſt of the prayers in our Liturgy open in like manner. Some declare, in general, the perfections of GOD, and his dealings to mankind: "almighty and moſt merciful father!* "O GOD, the creator and preſerver of all "mankind!† almighty GOD, father of all "mercies!‡ O GOD, whoſe never-failing pro-"vidence ordereth all things both in heaven "and earth,"§ each ſuited to the ſubject of

* General confeſſion.
† For all conditions of men.
‡ General Thankſgiving.
§ Collect, 8th Sunday after Trinity.

the prayer. Other prayers refer to ſome particular attribute of his nature, or ſpecial act of his providence: "almighty GOD, who haſt "given us grace to acknowledge the glory of "the eternal Trinity!* almighty GOD, who "haſt given us thy Son to take our nature "upon him!† almighty GOD, by whoſe Spi-"rit the whole body of the church is governed "and ſanctified!‡ O GOD, who by the lead-"ing of a ſtar didſt manifeſt thy Son to the "Gentiles!"§ each relating to the object of the feſtival. Several prayers in our Liturgy end like the Lord's Prayer, in giving glory to GOD, by acknowledging his nature and diſpenſations; "through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; "to whom with thee and the Holy Ghoſt be "all honour and glory, world without end:‖ "through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, who liveth "and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghoſt, "ever, one GOD, world without end:"¶ "O "bleſſed Jeſus, who ſtandeſt at the right hand "of GOD, to ſuccour all thoſe that ſuffer for "thee, our only mediator and advocate!" ::

* Trinity Sunday.
† Chriſtmas Day.
‡ Good Friday.
§ Epiphany.
‖ General Thankſgiving.
¶ Eaſter Day.
:: St. Stephen's Day.

Confeſſion is an acknowledgment of our ſins, with a petition for the pardon of them, and grace to forſake them. We cannot conſider the perfections of GOD, and his dominion over us, without an afflicting ſenſe of many failures in our reverence and obedience. Sorrow, therefore, for ſin, is the perpetual feeling of our minds: and an acknowledgment of ſin, with petition for pardon and grace, is the natural conſequence of this ſorrow. "GOD, be mer-"ciful to me a ſinner,"* is the proper ſentiment and language of us all. We have ſins of omiſſion and commiſſion: "we have left undone "thoſe things which we ought to have done; "and we have done thoſe things which we "ought not to have done."† We have ſins which we remember; and ſins which we have forgotten: we have ſins, perhaps, which, through evil habit and blamable inattention, have even eſcaped our notice. We have ſins committed once, and ſins repeated. We have ſins forſaken, and ſins perſiſted in. We have ſins which, in part, aroſe from ignorance or infirmity. We have ſins, alas! which ſprung from wilfulneſs and preſumption. We have even ſins, of which the hardened ſinner is not

* Luke xviii. 13. † General Confeſſion.

aſhamed. "Who can tell how oft he offend-
"eth? O cleanſe thou me from my ſecret
"faults! from all my ſins, negligences, and
"ignorances! O keep thy ſervant from pre-
"ſumptuous ſins; let them not have dominion
"over me: let me be innocent from any great
"offence:"* let me not glory in my ſhame!

Thankſgiving is an acknowledgment of the Goodneſs of GOD, diſplayed in his dealings to mankind. The ſubjects of thankſgiving, therefore, are as various as the paſt acts of his goodneſs. He called us into being. He gave us reaſon. He appointed this earth for our abode. Every faculty in us, every object around us, and every enjoyment growing out of them, are his gift. He preſerves us, while we are in this world; and he has provided for us another. Man, by ſin, made himſelf unworthy of all theſe bleſſings. He brought upon himſelf Death, propenſity to ſin, and the expectation of puniſhment in the world to come. The Son of GOD came to deliver us from all theſe evils. He redeems us from death, by raiſing us from the dead: he aids us againſt our propenſity to ſin, by his Holy Spirit: he ſaves us from puniſhment in another world,

* Pſal. xix. 13, 14, and Litany.

by obtaining our pardon. Thus the Goodneſs of God is diſplayed in Mercy. God hath promiſed to us, on our faith and obedience, everlaſting happineſs. Beſides theſe bleſſings common to all mankind, every nation, family, and individual, have ſome one bleſſing or more, peculiar, in kind or degree, to themſelves. The inhabitants of this country have many: chriſtian education and worſhip; liberty and ſecurity; public proſperity; private abundance, ſufficiency, or aſſiſtance in want; health; or remedy, or conſolation, in ſickneſs. "O that "men would therefore praiſe the Lord for his "goodneſs, and declare the wonders which he "doeth for the children of men! that they "would offer unto him the ſacrifice of thankſ-"giving"* and obedience! that they would praiſe him "with their lips and in their lives!"†

Supplication is a petition for a continuance of the bleſſings which we enjoy, and for the grant of ſuch other bleſſings as it ſhall pleaſe God to beſtow. Theſe bleſſings are Temporal or Spiritual: that is, they relate to our bodies and the comforts of this life; or to our ſouls, their preſent purity, and eternal happineſs. Temporal bleſſings are to be aſked with

* Pſal. cvii. 21, 22. † General Thankſgiving.

an entire ſubmiſſion to the good pleaſure of GOD, and a dutiful acquieſcence in his wiſe and kind providence: "not my will, but thine, "be done!"* Spiritual bleſſings are to be aſked with an humble reliance on his fatherly goodneſs; on his mercy, and his gracious promiſes. The prayer of St. Chryſoſtom is an admirable guide. In bleſſings temporal, "fulfil now, O Lord, the deſires and petitions "of thy ſervants," with this reſerve, "as may "be moſt expedient for them." In bleſſings ſpiritual, which are always expedient, without reſerve, "granting us in this world know-"ledge of thy truth, and in the world to come "life everlaſting."†

Thankſgivings and Supplications are to be offered for ourſelves and others. Our Lord commands us to pray for our enemies:‡ and every petition in his divine prayer is in the name, and for the benefit, of all men. St. James directs us to pray one for another.§ St. Paul exhorts "that ſupplications, interceſſions, and "giving of thanks, be made for all men." He gives theſe weighty reaſons for his exhortation: that ſuch an offering "is good and acceptable

* Luke xxii. 42.
† Common Prayer.
‡ Matth. v. 44.
§ James v. 16.

" in the ſight of GOD our Saviour: that we " have one GOD, who wills all men to be ſaved; " and one Mediator who gave himſelf a ranſom " for all."* Thus do piety, gratitude, and charity, move us to pray " for all ſorts and con- " ditions of men."†

One thought, or ſentiment, muſt run through every part of prayer; namely, a reſolution, and profeſſion, of continued and increaſing reverence and obedience to GOD. When, in Adoration, we acknowledge his perfections, and his dominion over us, we reſolve and promiſe to love and fear him. When, in Confeſſion, we lament our ſins, and aſk for pardon and grace, we reſolve and promiſe to improve in holineſs. When, in Thankſgiving, we acknowledge the goodneſs of GOD, diſplayed in bleſſings already received; or, in Supplication, we implore it for bleſſings yet to come; we reſolve and promiſe to labour daily to be leſs unworthy of his favour.

If we offer our prayer with this pious thought and holy reſolution, we have hope that GOD will graciouſly hear us. For his Goodneſs moves him to receive the offerings of his creatures; and his Mercy inclines him to accept

* 1 Tim. ii. 1—6. † Common Prayer.

them, when preſented in the name of Jeſus Chriſt; "for through him we have an acceſs " by the Holy Spirit to the Father."* "O " thou who heareſt the prayer, unto thee ſhall " all fleſh come."†

* Eph. ii. 18. † Pſal. lxv. 2.

SERMON XVI.

ON THE SACRAMENTS.

MATTH. XXVIII. 19.

GO YE, AND TEACH ALL NATIONS; BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST: TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU.

THE things which GOD commands us to DO, are declared in the Holy Bible. You find them among the laws of the Old Teſtament, delivered by Moſes and the Prophets; and in the laws of the New Teſtament, delivered by Chriſt and his Apoſtles.* GOD hath commanded the greater part of theſe things to be done by all men, in every age, heathens (ſo far as they are known to them†), jews, and chriſtians. They belong to their nature as reaſonable creatures: they are neceſſary to their wellbeing here, and to their acceptance with GOD hereafter. Such are the duties com-

* See Sermon iii. p. 27.

† Rom. i. 19, 20. Acts xiv. 17.

manded or implied in the Ten Commandments; and explained and enlarged by Chriſt and his Apoſtles. They are uſually called Moral Duties. There are other things which GOD hath commanded to be done, but not by all men, in every age. They do not belong to their nature as reaſonable creatures: they are not neceſſary to the wellbeing of all men here, nor to their acceptance with GOD hereafter. Nevertheleſs they are to be done by all perſons who are commanded to do them: they are neceſſary to THEIR wellbeing here, and to their acceptance with GOD hereafter. Theſe things, being in particular ages, and for peculiar reaſons, ſpecially inſtituted and impoſed by GOD, are called Poſitive Inſtitutions: and, as they relate to ſome indifferent action or ceremony, they are called alſo Ceremonial Obſervances.

I cannot better explain to you the nature of a Poſitive Inſtitution, or Ceremonial Obſervance, than by ſaying, that it is the performance or forbearance of an action indifferent in itſelf, commanded or forbidden by GOD, as a trial (we ſuppoſe) of our faith and obedience, and as a condition of our obtaining a bleſſing.

GOD has appointed ſome ceremonial obſervance in every age of the world. He ſaid unto

our firſt parents; "of the tree of the know-
"ledge of good and evil, ye ſhall not eat: in
"the day that ye eat thereof, ye ſhall die."*
They failed in their faith and obedience; and
loſt the bleſſing of immortality.

Offerings were made to GOD in the earlieſt times; we believe, by his command. Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruits of the ground; and Abel, of the firſtlings of the flock.† Cain failed in his faith; and was not accepted.‡ Noah offered burnt Offerings:§ and ſo did Abraham, and his family.

GOD enjoined Circumciſion to Abraham and his poſterity: to which he added, by the law of Moſes given to the Children of Iſrael, the Paſſover, and other ceremonial obſervances. The performance of theſe injunctions was the condition of their enjoying the bleſſings of their religion.‖

Theſe ceremonial obſervances have ceaſed. The law concerning the forbidden fruit ended with the tranſgreſſion of it. Our firſt parents were caſt out of the garden of Eden; and the tree was no more ſeen. The law of Sacrifices ended at our Saviour's death. He offered one all-

* Gen. ii. 17. iii. 3.
† Gen. iv. 3, 4.
‡ See Heb. xi. 4.
§ Gen. viii. 20.
‖ Gen. xvii. 14. Exod. xii. 15.

ſufficient ſacrifice for all mankind. The law of Circumciſion, and other ceremonial obſervances preſcribed to the Jews, concluded when the Meſſiah had appeared, and they were no longer a Peculiar People, but were called with the Gentiles into the Univerſal Church of Chriſt.

Our Bleſſed Saviour, the evening before he ſuffered, "took bread, and brake it, and gave "it to his diſciples, and ſaid; Take, eat; this "is my body which is broken for you: do "this in remembrance of me. He alſo took "wine, and gave it to them, and ſaid; Drink "ye of it; this is my blood of the new teſta-"ment (or covenant) which is ſhed for you, "for the remiſſion of ſins: do this in remem-"brance of me."*

A little before he aſcended into heaven, he ſaid to his Apoſtles; "Go ye, and teach all "nations, make all nations my diſciples,† bap-"tizing them in the name of the Father, and "of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt."

Theſe ceremonial obſervances are to continue to the end of the world. They are called in the Holy Scripture, the one, Baptiſm, or

* Matth. xxvi. 26—28. Mark xiv. 22—24. Luke xxii. 19, 20. 1 Cor. xi. 23—26.

† See margin of the Bible.

Waſhing; the other, the Supper of our Lord, and the Communion of the body and blood of Chriſt. They have long obtained the title of Sacraments. This word ſignifies an oath, or vow; particularly an oath or vow of allegiance and obedience, made by a Soldier to his Commander; and has therefore been given, as a name, to theſe obſervances, in as much as they imply and contain an oath or vow of allegiance and obedience to Jeſus Chriſt, "the "Captain of our Salvation."* As the ſacrament of Baptiſm is adminiſtered to a Chriſtian but once in his life, and the ſacrament of the Lord's Supper is adminiſtered repeatedly, and is in conſequence mentioned more frequently, it has become uſual, in common diſcourſe, to diſtinguiſh the Lord's Supper by calling it The Sacrament.

THE Sacrament of Baptiſm is ordained by Chriſt to be the method of admitting every perſon to be his diſciple. He ſaid unto the Apoſtles, "Go ye, and teach all nations, make "all nations my diſciples, baptizing them in "the name of the Father, and of the Son, and

* Heb. ii. 10. See this alluſion in the Office for Baptiſm.

" of the Holy Ghoſt: teaching them to ob-
" ſerve all things whatſoever I have com-
" manded you." The Qualifications neceſſary for any perſon to be made a diſciple of Chriſt, and to be baptized, are a profeſſion of faith in him, and a promiſe of obedience to his laws. The Bleſſings following this diſcipleſhip and baptiſm, are pardon of ſin, and divine aſſiſtance to live righteouſly: "a death
" unto ſin, and a new birth unto righteouſ-
" neſs."* Baptiſm is ordained to be "a Sign
" of theſe bleſſings, a Means whereby we re-
" ceive the ſame, and a Pledge to aſſure us of
" them."* The firſt diſciples whom the Apoſtles made, were perſons at years of diſcretion, capable of profeſſing faith and promiſing obedience. They were moved by the preaching of Peter to believe in Jeſus Chriſt; and they ſaid unto him and the other Apoſtles,
" men and brethren what ſhall we do? Peter
" ſaid unto them repent, and be baptized for
" the remiſſion of ſins, and ye ſhall receive
" the gift of the Holy Ghoſt."† That is:
" you have faith in Chriſt: repent ye of your
" ſins; and promiſe to obſerve all things what-
" ſoever he hath commanded: be baptized;

* Catechiſm. † Acts ii. 37—41.

"and ye ſhall thereby obtain forgiveneſs of "ſins, and the aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit." They gladly received his word, and were baptized; and became, with the Apoſtles and other followers of Jeſus, the firſt members of the Chriſtian Church. Theſe perſons probably, and the early Chriſtians after them certainly, brought their infant children to be admitted into the Chriſtian Church by Baptiſm, as the infant children of the Jews were admitted into the Jewiſh Church by Circumciſion. "The promiſe" of the Goſpel "was to "them and to their children:" and "the chil-"dren of a Chriſtian parent were holy;"* that is, fit to be conſecrated to Chriſt, on the preſumption that they will be educated in chriſtian belief and practice. Theſe infants, "by rea-"ſon of their tender age,"† were incapable of profeſſing faith or promiſing obedience. Their parents, therefore, or other perſons, profeſſed and promiſed for them. They were admitted into the Church, and intitled to the bleſſings ſignified and conveyed in Baptiſm, on condition that, when they came to age, they ſhall profeſs and promiſe for themſelves. In the mean time, they were "members of Chriſt,

* 1 Cor. vii. 14. † Catechiſm.

" children of GOD, and inheritors of the king-
" dom of heaven."* They had moreover the benefit of chriſtian inſtruction and worſhip, in the houſe of their parents, and in the public congregation.

In this manner Baptiſm has been adminiſtered to perſons at years of diſcretion, and to infants, in all times and places; and is now adminiſtered among us at this day. The few perſons who have not been baptized in their infancy, anſwer for themſelves "in the preſence of " choſen witneſſes;" and are baptized according to the form in our Liturgy, appointed for " the Miniſtration of Baptiſm to ſuch as are " of riper years." Infants, who cannot anſwer for themſelves, have Sureties to anſwer for them; and are baptized according to the form appointed for " the Miniſtration of Baptiſm of " Infants." Theſe Sureties are called Godfathers and Godmothers; becauſe they act as ſpiritual parents to the infants, bringing them forth into the family of Chriſt, and making them the children of GOD. The duty of Godfathers and Godmothers is plainly declared in the Exhortation following the Office of Baptiſm of Infants. It is, to ſee that the Child be

* Catechiſm.

inſtructed in the profeſſion and promiſe then made in his name: to provide that he be taught, and exhorted, to believe and to live according to this profeſſion and promiſe: to take care that, at a proper ſeaſon, he be brought to the Biſhop to be Confirmed.

At Confirmation, the young perſon "renews this profeſſion and promiſe: he ratifies them," or takes them upon himſelf: "he acknowledges that he is bound to believe, "and to do, all thoſe things which his Godfathers and Godmothers undertook for "him. The Biſhop and Congregation pray "that he may be confirmed and ſtrengthened "by the Holy Ghoſt the Comforter." The Biſhop lays his hands upon him, and prays to GOD for him, that he may, by divine aſſiſtance, continue "a child of GOD for ever: that, led "by the Holy Spirit, he may daily increaſe in "knowledge and goodneſs; and that he may "finally come to his everlaſting kingdom." Then the Biſhop bleſſes him, as he had formerly been baptized, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt."*

The Qualifications for Confirmation are,

* Office for Confirmation.

a perfect underſtanding of the baptiſmal profeſſion and promiſe, and a deliberate reſolution to hold faſt and perform them. To this end, the young perſon is to be well inſtructed in the plain doctrines of the chriſtian religion, and in the duties of the chriſtian life: and he is to be deeply impreſſed with the neceſſity of performing theſe duties, as the condition of his ſalvation. I believe it is a prevailing error, to offer children for Confirmation, before they are at an age likely to be capable of theſe qualifications: by which unwary precipitation, they loſe the benefit of the laſting impreſſion, which the preparation and ceremony cannot fail to make upon the mind, at a more mature age.

THE Sacrament of Baptiſm is to be received but once; becauſe it is the method of Admiſſion into the Chriſtian Church. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is to be received repeatedly; becauſe it is the method of Continuance in it. This repetition is preſcribed in the words of our Lord, and of his Apoſtle: "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remem-"brance of me. For as often as ye eat this "bread, and drink this cup, ye do ſhew, or

" repreſent, the Lord's death till he come"* to judgment.

As a profeſſion of faith in Chriſt, and a promiſe of obedience to his laws, are the Qualifications neceſſary for receiving Baptiſm, ſo are they, for receiving the Lord's Supper. The Bleſſings which follow the Lord's Supper, are a continuation of the bleſſings which followed Baptiſm: pardon of ſin, and divine aſſiſtance in living righteouſly: " the ſtrengthening and refreſhing of our ſouls."† The Lord's Supper, like Baptiſm, is " a Sign of " theſe bleſſings, a Means whereby we re- " ceive them, and a Pledge to aſſure us of " them."† It is " the communion, or par- " taking, of the body and blood of Chriſt;"‡ that is, of the bleſſings obtained by his body broken and his blood ſhed. But there is this very material difference to be made, when we inquire into the qualifications of any one for Baptiſm, and when any one inquires into his own qualifications for the Lord's Supper. Baptiſm is adminiſtered to an infant, or perſon of riper years, to be admitted into the Chriſtian Church, on a profeſſion of faith in Chriſt, and a promiſe of obedience to his laws. The

* 1 Cor. xi. 25, 26. † Catechiſm. See Article of Religion 25.
‡ 1 Cor. x. 16.

queſtions put to the Surety for the Infant, or to the perſon of riper years, are; "doſt thou "believe? wilt thou obediently keep GOD's "holy will and commandments," as declared by his Son Jeſus Chriſt, "and walk in the "ſame all the days of thy life?"* The Lord's Supper is adminiſtered to an Actual Member of the Chriſtian Church, after a trial of his ſincerity and ſtrength, in holding faſt this profeſſion, and in performing this promiſe. He therefore is bound to put theſe queſtions to himſelf: "have I believed? have I obediently kept "GOD's holy will and commandments, as de-"clared by his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and walked in "the ſame all the days of my life?" So far as he has failed in believing, or in obediently keeping GOD's commandments, he is to renew his faith and virtue by recollection, repentance, and prayer. "He is to have a lively faith in "GOD's mercy through Chriſt, and repent "him truly of his ſins, ſtedfaſtly purpoſing to "lead a new life."†. Thus the receiving of the Lord's Supper is a continual renewal of our Baptiſmal profeſſion and promiſe. "This Sa-"crament was ordained for the continual re-"membrance of the ſacrifice of the death of

* Offices for Baptiſm. † Catechiſm.

"Chriſt, and of the benefits which we receive "thereby;"* and, conſequently, for a continual profeſſion of our faith in that ſacrifice, and for a continual promiſe of our obedience, (growing out of that faith,) by which alone we can receive thoſe benefits. Accordingly our Communion Service, in its exhortations, confeſſion, and ſupplications, conſtantly lays before our minds, the objects of our faith, and the branches of our obedience: it calls forth the correſponding effuſions of the heart, thankfulneſs for the bleſſings of the Goſpel, repentance for paſt failures, and reſolution of amendment: concluding with a ſolemn dedication of "ourſelves, our ſouls, and bodies," to the ſervice of GOD; and a Doxology to the adorable Trinity, in whoſe name we have been baptized, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.

THUS our holy Religion, by its Doctrines and Precepts, marks out to us one plain Line of Duty from the beginning to the end of life. It preſents it more largely to our view, and impreſſes it more forcibly upon our minds, by its Sacraments; leading us in it, by theſe

* Catechiſm.

viſible ſigns and affecting ceremonies, from the Font to the Altar, and from the Altar to the Grave. This line of duty is, aſſuredly, a path of eaſe, of pleaſantneſs, and peace: faith in the divine Saviour of the world, and obedience to the Commandments of GOD: repentance, confeſſion, and amendment, when we have failed in our obedience: a reliance on his Holy Spirit; who will guide, refreſh, and ſtrengthen, us from day to day. He accepts our ſincere, though imperfect, obedience: and offers to our beſt endeavours an everlaſting reward.

Theſe are the Sacraments which Chriſt hath ordained: the Bleſſings which we receive by them: and our reſpective Duties concerning them.

Parents! you have done well in dedicating your infant children to our Gracious Maſter: who ſaid unto his erring diſciples, "ſuffer the "little children to come unto me, and forbid "them not: for of ſuch is the kingdom of "GOD."* You have performed your duty the more perfectly, if you have taken the earlieſt day to preſent them before the Lord; impatient to ſee them "received into the Congre-

* Mark x. 14.

" gation of Chriſt's Flock;"* members of his Church on earth, and inheritors of his heavenly kingdom: not delaying, for conſiderations trifling and diſproportionate, a day ſo welcome to a Chriſtian Parent: a day, wherein the heir of his ſins and infirmities receives the ſeal of his title, (never to be forfeited, but by his own tranſgreſſion) to a future ſtate of purity and perfection: a day, wherein he begins the journey of life, placed by your pious care in the path which leads to a holy and happy immortality. Purſue the bleſſed work which you have begun, and train him diligently in the way wherein he is to go. By bringing him to be baptized, you have engaged to educate him in chriſtian belief and practice. You are his Sureties and his Guides; and his Godfathers and Godmothers are your aſſiſtants in theſe offices of parental love and duty.

Godfathers and Godmothers! you are ſecond parents to the child, for whom you have obtained the name and privileges of a Chriſtian. If you ſee, or are well aſſured, that his Parents inſtruct him in chriſtian knowledge and duty, you have only to encourage and

* Offices for Public Baptiſm.

aſſiſt them, as occaſion may ariſe. But if his Father and his Mother be taken from him, or "if they forſake him," or neglect him, it will be your charitable office "to take him up."* You are to provide for his inſtruction by every means in your power. Your engagement demands your utmoſt endeavours: and is not diſcharged till he is confirmed.

Children! be thankful to your heavenly father, who hath called you to this hope of eternal happineſs, through Jeſus Chriſt. Be grateful to your Parents, and to your Godfathers and Godmothers, by whoſe kind and pious care you are made "members of Chriſt, chil-"dren of GOD, and inheritors of the kingdom "of heaven."† Be attentive to the religious inſtruction which you receive from them, from your Teachers, and from your Miniſter. Remember the things which your Godfathers and Godmothers profeſſed and promiſed in your name; which you are reſolved to believe and to do; which you will ſoon profeſs and promiſe for yourſelves: and "pray unto GOD, "to give you his grace, that you may conti-"nue in the ſame unto your life's end."† Say

* Pſal. xxvii. 12. † Catechiſm.

your prayers every morning and evening. Come conſtantly to Church. Endeavour to pleaſe GOD in thought, word, and deed.

Young perſons who have been confirmed! you have taken upon yourſelves the profeſſion and promiſe, which were made in your name at your baptiſm. You have dedicated yourſelves to the ſervice of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. You have devoted yourſelves to the inſtruction of his word, and to the guidance of his Spirit. You are reſolved to obey his laws: and you hope for everlaſting happineſs through his merits. A bleſſed reſolution, and a glorious hope! I pray GOD you may fulfil your reſolution: and then, aſſuredly, you will not be diſappointed in your hope. You will ſoon be called upon to give one ſpecial proof of your obedience to his laws. You will be invited to the Lord's Supper, which "he hath commanded to be received" in remembrance of his death. You will be exhorted to meet your elder brethren, that you may commemorate with them the all-ſufficient ſacrifice of the Body and Blood of Chriſt, to which we owe the pardon of our ſins, the aid of his Spirit, and the promiſe of everlaſting life.

To You, my brethren more advanced in age and wiſdom, who have conſtantly attended the

Holy Table, I need not offer any exhortation. Go on, and proſper, in the name of the Lord, in the ſtrength of his grace, and with the aſſurance of his bleſſing.

But to You, alas! who reſiſt continually the gracious invitation of his word, and the motions of his ſpirit; who are deaf to the whiſpers of your conſcience, and the admonitions of his Miniſters; who rarely or never unite with your chriſtian brethren, in this offering of dutiful affection, and reverent obedience, to our gracious Maſter; what ſhall I ſay more unto you? I can only lay his words once more before you: let them ſound continually in your ears, and ſink deep into your hearts: "Take, "eat; this is my body which is broken for you: "Drink ye all of this, for this is my blood which "is ſhed for you: Do this in remembrance of "me." They are the words of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt: who, being the eternal ſon of GOD, became man for us and for our ſalvation: who, knowing no ſin, made himſelf a ſin-offering for us; and died upon the Croſs, that we might live. They are the command of him, in whoſe name we have all been baptized: to whoſe laws we have vowed unlimited obedience: on whoſe merits and favour we

depend for happineſs. They are the requiſition of our greateſt friend and benefactor: "for greater love hath no man than this, that "he lay down his life for his friends."* They are the injunction of our Lord and Maſter; in right of Creation and Redemption; in as much as we are the work of his hands, and the purchaſe of his blood: who hath declared expreſsly the conditions of our Salvation; and, hath promiſed to reward our obedience with a glorious immortality. Whether, therefore, we conſider the infinite majeſty, or the amazing condeſcenſion, of our divine lawgiver; whether we weigh the inexpreſſible obligations which he has conferred upon us, or the vows by which we have bound ourſelves; whether we view the right which he has to demand, or the proſpects by which he invites, our obedience; if we are moved by any principle of duty, or any hope of happineſs; we ſhall liſten to his words with affection, reverence, and obedience: "Do this in remem-"brance of me."

* John xv. 13.

SERMON XVII.

ON THE SACRAMENTS.

2 KINGS V. 12.

ARE NOT ABANA AND PHARPAR, RIVERS OF DAMASCUS, BETTER THAN ALL THE WATERS OF ISRAEL? MAY I NOT WASH IN THEM AND BE CLEAN? SO HE TURNED AND WENT AWAY IN A RAGE.

THE occaſion of theſe words is well known. The ſituation of the kingdoms of Iſrael and Syria engaged them in frequent wars. Naaman, a general of the Syrian armies, was afflicted with the leproſy. By means of a captive maid from the kingdom of Iſrael, he was informed that there was in Samaria, the capital city of her native country, a prophet who was enabled, by miracle, to cure his malady. This prophet was Eliſha. Naaman attended the prophet, deſiring to be healed. "Eliſha "ſent a meſſenger unto him, ſaying, Go, and "waſh in Jordan ſeven times; and thy fleſh "ſhall come again unto thee, and thou ſhalt "be clean." Naaman, offended, partly by the ſmall reſpect ſhewn to him by the prophet,

but chiefly by the ſimplicity of the remedy, which his ignorance led him to diſtruſt, and his pride moved him to deſpiſe, turned away with this fooliſh exclamation: "Behold, I "thought he will ſurely come out to me, and "ſtand, and call on the name of the Lord his "God, and wave his hand over the place, and "ſo recover the Leper. Are not Abana and "Pharpar, rivers of Damaſcus,* better than all "the waters of Iſrael? may I not waſh in them "and be clean?"† He underſtood not, that the Prophet deſigned to reſtore him, not by any healing virtue in the waters of Jordan, but by the power of GOD; that the form or manner in which the cure was wrought, was perfectly indifferent; whether by meſſage or perſonal attendance, with one ceremony or another. He conſidered not that the Prophet knew beſt the extent of his own commiſſion, and the deſigns of his heavenly maſter. He proudly refuſed to accept the bleſſing which he deſired, becauſe it was offered to him in a way which his own imagination had not ſuggeſted, or did not approve.

Men are apt to argue, and to act, in far more important matters, like this uninſtructed cap-

* Capital city of Syria. † 2 Kings v. 10—12.

tain of the Syrian armies. The end, and aim, of our being is happineſs. We ſeek it inceſſantly in the preſent life. We deſign to provide for it in a life to come. Our guide in this purſuit is the Will of GOD, the author and diſpoſer of our being. His will is declared in the Holy Scriptures. We are to read them with attention and reverence; and carefully endeavour to apprehend their meaning. We are to receive their doctrines as the ſtandard of religious knowledge; and their precepts as the rule of religious conduct. This is Wiſdom: to attend the Prophet in Samaria: to underſtand his meſſage: to conform to his inſtructions. Upon this plain principle, whatever the Holy Scriptures clearly affirm is a truth; and ought to be believed: whatever they manifeſtly enjoin, is a duty; and ought to be done. All further inquiry is ſhut out. This is the declaration, and this is the will, of GOD. If we are ſincerely purſuing truth and happineſs, this is the road: behold, "the way, the truth, and "the life."* But men will ſometimes "ſtand "at the door of the houſe of the Prophet,"† and yet diſpute the propriety, or the efficacy, of his inſtructions. They will read the holy

* John xiv. 6. † 2 Kings v. 9.

ſcriptures with an imperfect attention and a partial reverence. They will not open their underſtandings to "a hard ſaying,"* or ſtrive to comprehend a Leſſon, which contradicts an habitual prejudice, or a favourite paſſion.

A prevailing example of this deluſion occurs in the neglect of poſitive inſtitutions, or ceremonial obſervances.† Our bleſſed Lord, after perfecting the Moral Law,‡ ordained two ceremonial obſervances, which we uſually call Sacraments. The evening before he ſuffered, "he took bread, and brake it, and gave it to "his diſciples, and ſaid; Take, eat: this is "my body which is broken for you: do this "in remembrance of me. He alſo took wine, "and gave it to them, and ſaid; Drink ye of "it: this is my blood of the new teſtament, "or covenant, which is ſhed for you, for the "remiſſion of ſins: do this in remembrance of "me." "As often as ye eat this bread, and "drink this cup," (they are the words, either of our Lord, or his Apoſtle) "ye do ſhew the "Lord's death till he come."§ After his re-

* John vi. 60.

† See Sermon xvi. p. 188.

‡ See Matth. v. 17—48.

§ Matt. xxvi. 26—28. Mark xiv. 22—24. Luke xxii. 19, 20. 1 Cor. xi. 23—26.

ſurrection he ſaid to his Apoſtles; "all power "is given unto me in heaven and in earth. "Go ye, therefore, and make all nations my "diſciples, baptizing them in the name of the "Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy "Ghoſt; teaching them to obſerve all things "whatſoever I have commanded you: and, "lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end "of the world."* His adminiſtration, his protection, and his laws, were to be univerſal and perpetual: and, with reſpect to theſe his laſt injunctions, it is difficult to conceive, how he could declare his will in more preciſe or peremptory terms. Yet there are perſons who appear to receive his laws with reverence; and give many proofs of their ſincerity, in a religious and virtuous life. They read and hear the Holy Scriptures. They attend the public worſhip. They are members of a Church, which declares theſe two ſacraments to be "generally "neceſſary to ſalvation."† One of them, by the pious care of their parents, they have received in their infancy: they are educated under its vows; and at years of diſcretion perſonally renew them. They profeſs themſelves "Soldiers "and Servants of Chriſt" under the admini-

* Matth. xxviii. 18—20. † Catechiſm.

ſtration of One ſacrament: and yet they delay, or refuſe, to obey his command by a participation of the Other. This omiſſion is a ſingular error in judgment, ſhall I call it? or a weakneſs in reſolution? or a perverſeneſs of heart? I am perſuaded that it deſerves, in many caſes, the milder appellation, and the more gentle reproof: but it is, in all, a departure from religious duty; and muſt, conſequently diminiſh the happineſs, and darken the proſpects, of the Chriſtian life. This omiſſion muſt give pain to an ingenuous mind, which has formed the wiſe and honourable reſolution, to act in all things agreeably to reaſon and conſcience. It muſt diſturb the repoſe of a religious heart, warmed with the love of GOD, impreſſed with a ſenſe of his goodneſs, and animated with a deſire to pleaſe him. It muſt inflict regret and ſhame upon a diſciple of Chriſt, bound to him by high obligations, and devoted by ſolemn engagements.

Whatever may be the motive, or the plea, for this omiſſion, I ſubmit to the judgment of every ſincere chriſtian the following conſiderations.

The foundation of all religion is the love and fear of GOD. His will is the rule of our conduct. It is generally evident from the nature

of his laws, that they are holy, and conducive to our welfare. It is always to be concluded that they are ſo, from the conſideration of his purity, wiſdom, and goodneſs. But whatever we may know concerning them, they demand our obedience. He is the fountain, and the meaſure, of truth and good. He is the ſovereign lawgiver. The perfection and happineſs of his reaſonable creatures depend upon their conformity to his will.

We may diſcern that the celebration of the Holy Communion is conducive to our welfare. It is an act of Faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. It is an act of Obedience to his commands. It is an act of Worſhip, offered in the manner preſcribed by him. It is a Renewal of our baptiſmal profeſſion and promiſe. All theſe religious acts improve the heart; diſpoſing it to perſeverance, and leading it to perfection, in righteouſneſs.

This Sacrament is a lively repreſentation of the moſt affecting inſtance of the love of GOD to man. It has therefore a peculiar tendency to cheriſh, and confirm, our reverential gratitude, our humble confidence in his mercy, our truſt in his promiſes, and our deſire to pleaſe him.

This Sacrament is a way appointed by the divine author of our ſalvation, for the communication of his ſpiritual bleſſings. It is like the waters of Jordan to the afflicted Syrian: it is a means of giving health and vigour to a degenerate nature. God grants his benefits, temporal and ſpiritual, by the choſen methods of his providence. He hath not given us the neceſſaries and conveniencies of the preſent life, without the concurrence of our art and labour. We know, inſtructed by the experience of ages, that the wheat and the barley will not ſpring, where it has not been ſown; and that the tree which is not duly planted and foſtered, will die, or not bear the deſired fruit. And why? becauſe God, in his good pleaſure, hath ſo ordained. He might have made the bread-corn and the fruit-tree to grow of itſelf, as he does the graſs of the meadow, and the trees of the foreſt: he might have provided for all men, as he did for the Iſraelites; and fed them "with "the bread of heaven."* But he has taught us to raiſe this ſuſtenance and comfort for ourſelves. He has cauſed life, and the ſatisfactions of it, to depend upon our prudence and activity. He ſhews us, by the courſe of na-

* Pſal. cv. 39.

ture, the means of preſervation; and were we to neglect them, the certain conſequences would be famine and death. His procedure is the ſame with reſpect to our ſalvation, and the bleſſings of a life to come. He has made known the conditions: he has declared the means: "whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall he "reap."* And the return of "ſummer and "winter, of ſeed time and harveſt, while the "earth remaineth,"† is not more certain, than the everlaſting fruit of our labours in this ſtate of trial. We ſee, indeed, the courſe of this world; we know it by experience: the events of a world to come are objects of faith and expectation. But the revolution of a few years will ſhew to every one here preſent, and, I truſt, to his eternal comfort, the reality of what he now believes. It will convince him, that no mark of reverence to the Almighty will paſs unnoticed; no act of obedience unrewarded; whether it were offered in conformity to the unchangeable rule of moral righteouſneſs, or to any ſpecial publication of his will.

Moral virtues and poſitive inſtitutions ſtand upon this common ground, that they are declared to be the will of God: this declaration

* Gal. vi. 7. † Gen. viii. 22.

continuing, they can never ceaſe to be the duty of man. They differ in this, that moral virtue is eternal and unchangeable; flowing from the nature and relation of things, and correſponding with the attributes of the Supreme Being. Poſitive inſtitutions, adapted to particular ſeaſons and ſituations, have been changed; and they will one day ceaſe. They were given to man in a ſtate of innocence, in one form; after the fall, in another; to the Hebrew nation in a third; and in a fourth to the whole Chriſtian world. Moral Virtue is an end; being the perfection of a reaſonable creature, ſubſervient to the glory of the Creator. Poſitive inſtitutions are means conducive to that end; as they impreſs upon the mind ſome important truth, and warm the heart with ſuitable affections. The law given to our firſt parents, concerning the forbidden fruit, appears to have been deſigned for moral purpoſes. It ſeems adapted to remind them continually of the ſovereignty of GOD, over themſelves, and over every creature which miniſtered to their happineſs: to ſhew them the neceſſity of ſubmitting to his will every faculty and paſſion of their nature; the pride of reaſon, and the importunity of the ſenſes; the

deſire of knowledge, and the call of appetite. In this view, it was a perpetual leſſon of moral virtue. The patriarchal ſacrifices, the principal part of the Jewiſh ritual, the ſacraments of the Chriſtian Church, are, each in their reſpective ſeaſons, repreſentations of one great event, ſymbols of religious truths, aids and incentives to moral holineſs. "They are the "ſhadow; and the body is" the ſacrifice "of "Chriſt."* They point this way or that way, forward or backward, (like the natural ſhadow,) accordingly as the ſubſtance is approaching or is paſſed by. The Sacrifices of ancient times accompanied and ſupported the prophecies which foretold his coming: the Sacraments of theſe latter days attend and confirm the hiſtory which declares that he is come. The ceremonial obſervance foretelling ceaſed on the arrival of the event foretold: the ceremonial obſervance commemorating will never ceaſe, until the event commemorated ſhall have had its complete effect "in "the day of redemption:"† it will "ſhew the "Lord's death till he come"‡ again to judgment.

* Coloſſ. ii. 17. † Eph. iv. 30.

‡ 1 Cor. xi. 26.

While, therefore, we preſs the obſervation of theſe poſitive inſtitutions, upon ſuch authority and argument as may not be reſiſted, we do not forget thoſe moral duties to which they are deſigned to miniſter. We think it the high commendation of theſe ceremonial obſervances, that, by divine influence and natural tendency, they incite us to the performance of every office of religion, and the practice of every virtue. The ſame reverence for his Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, which moved the pious chriſtian to bring his child to the Font, and to attend with his family at the Altar, will impel him to offer the conſtant and habitual devotion of his heart and life. It will induce him to viſit the "fatherleſs and the widows in "their affliction: it will keep him unſpotted "from the world."* The Signs and Memorials of a religion, which is founded on the higheſt act of divine love, and impoſes univerſal benevolence as its characteriſtic virtue, will form him after its own amiable likeneſs, "pure, "peaceable, gentle, eaſy to be entreated, full "of mercy and good fruits."† They will ſend him into public ſociety, the equitable magiſtrate, the peaceful citizen, the friendly neigh-

* James i. 27. † James iii. 17.

bour. They will diſmiſs him to the retirements of domeſtic life, the affectionate huſband and parent, and the indulgent maſter. He will find no diſcipline ſo likely to ſoften the heart, and civilize the manners, as the exerciſes of chriſtian piety; which inſpires, and cheriſhes, the humanity, kindneſs, and mutual condeſcenſion,* that conſtitute the eſſence of ſocial happineſs. An habitual conformity to the precepts of the goſpel, moral and ceremonial, will make religion not only the dictate of his underſtanding, but the object of his affections: virtue will be not only the deliberate choice of his will, but the ſentiment of his heart, and the unvaried colour of his life.

If any one here preſent, falling ſhort of this perfect character, hath been led away by the error of the Syrian Captain; you will, I hope, follow him in his better thoughts. You will liſten to the ſolid reaſoning, and affectionate expoſtulation, of your friends. "My father, if the "prophet had bid thee do ſome great thing, "wouldſt thou not have done it? how much "rather then, when he ſaith to thee, Waſh, "and be clean."†. The ceremonial obſervances preſcribed by Moſes to the Jews, were

* 1 John iv. 21. Rom. xii. 10. † 2 Kings v. 13.

many and burthenſome: thoſe enjoined by Chriſt to his diſciples are few and light: let not the "eaſineſs of his yoke"* make you negligent: let not the ſimplicity of his inſtitutions tempt you to doubt their efficacy: incur not the double fault of incredulity and diſobedience. Let us "walk in all his Commandments "and Ordinances."† Let us follow his own ſtriking example, as far as our preſent frailty will permit, and "fulfil all righteouſneſs."‡

The time is approaching, when inſtrumental ordinances, adapted to a ſtate of infirmity, ſhall ceaſe; when no malady ſhall call for the pool of Bethesda, or the waters of Jordan; when the "viſible pledges and ſigns of grace," ſhall, as we hope, be loſt in plentiful effuſions of it: when the means of ſpiritual improvement on earth, ſhall give way to conſummate holineſs in heaven.

* Matth. xi. 30. † Luke i. 6.
‡ Read Matth. iii. 13—15.

SERMON XVIII.

ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

1 CORINTHIANS XI. 27, 28, 29.

WHEREFORE, WHOSOEVER SHALL EAT THIS BREAD, AND DRINK THIS CUP, OF THE LORD UNWORTHILY, SHALL BE GUILTY OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF THE LORD.

BUT LET A MAN EXAMINE HIMSELF, AND SO LET HIM EAT OF THAT BREAD, AND DRINK OF THAT CUP.

FOR HE THAT EATETH AND DRINKETH UNWORTHILY, EATETH AND DRINKETH DAMNATION TO HIMSELF, NOT DISCERNING THE LORD'S BODY.

THE Jews, in obedience to the Law of Moſes, killed and eat the Paſſover, or Paſchal Lamb: one family or more, together, according to their numbers.* This ceremonial obſervance was a memorial of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage: it was alſo a ſhadow† of the deliverance of all men from the bondage of ſin and death. The paſſover, or paſchal lamb, was a type† of the Deliverer; "the lamb of "GOD which taketh away the ſins of the "world;‡ the lamb ordained to be ſlain from "the foundation of the world."§ The paſſo-

* Read Exodus xii. 1—30.

† See Sermon viii. p. 100, 101.

‡ John i. 29.

§ Rev. xiii. 8.

ver was ſacrificed year by year continually, until "Chriſt, our paſſover, was ſacrificed for "us."* The evening before he ſuffered, he eat the paſſover with his diſciples. He celebrated it for the laſt time: "I have deſired to "eat this paſſover with you, before I ſuffer: "I will no more eat of it, until it be fulfilled "in the kingdom of GOD:"† that is, "I will "no more eat of it: for to-morrow it will be "fulfilled in the ſacrifice of myſelf. The ce-"remonial obſervance foreſhewing ſhall ceaſe, "when the event foreſhewn ſhall have taken "place."

After eating the Paſſover, which prefigured his death, he ordained a new ceremonial obſervance, which was to commemorate it. He inſtituted the Holy Communion. The feaſt of the paſſover, being holden in the evening,‡ was uſually called the Paſchal Supper. The Holy Communion, inſtituted immediately after it, is called the Lord's Supper.

In imitation, probably, of the Jewiſh ceremony of eating the paſſover, and in alluſion to our Lord's ordaining the Holy Communion immediately after it, the firſt Chriſtians, at the

* 1 Cor. v. 7. † Luke xxii. 15.

‡ Exodus xii. 6, 8.

time they celebrated the Holy Communion, made a religious feaſt. Each family, or individual, contributed their portion of the victuals, according to their diſcretion and ability. This entertainment was called a Feaſt of Charity, or brotherly love.* So long as it was conducted in a religious manner, it was liable to no objection; although it was no part of the ordinance of Chriſt, nor was any way neceſſary to the due celebration of the Holy Communion. But diſorders ſoon attended it: and after a time, it was left off throughout the Chriſtian world.

Theſe diſorders appear firſt to have ariſen in the Church of Corinth; a large, wealthy, and luxurious city: wherein St. Paul ſeems to have found more to reprove and amend, than in any other Congregation to which his Epiſtles are addreſſed. Concerning the Holy Communion, and the Feaſt of Charity accompanying it, he thus reproves the Corinthians. "Now in this "that I declare unto you, I praiſe you not:† "that ye come together, not for the better, "but for the worſe. For firſt of all when "ye come together in the Church, I hear

* See Jude 12. 2 Pet. ii. 13.

† He had praiſed them, 1 Cor. xi. 2.

" that there are diviſions among you. When " ye" ſo "come together, therefore, it is not " to eat the Lord's Supper," as ye ought. " For, in eating, every one taketh, before " other, his own ſupper: and one is hungry, " and another is drunken. What? have ye " not houſes to eat and to drink in? or deſpiſe " ye the Church of GOD? and ſhame them that " have not, or are poor?* What ſhall I ſay " unto you? ſhall I praiſe you in this? I praiſe " you not."†

It is uncertain whether the Corinthians celebrated their Feaſt of Charity before the Holy Communion, or mixed them both together: in either caſe they ſo united them, that a diſorder in the Feaſt was a profanation of the Communion.

Accordingly the Apoſtle thus rebukes them. " When ye come together in the Church, ye " cannot be ſaid to eat the Lord's Supper; " which is a joint act of reverent devotion, ac- " companied by a religious feaſt at one com- " mon table. For ye come in parties, divided " by ſome evil diſſenſion, or improper diſtinc- " tion. Each party, family, or individual, eat " their own ſupper, without waiting for others.

* See margin of the Bible. † 1 Cor. xi. 17—22.

" The rich, in particular, ſeparate themſelves " from the poor, and ſuffer them not to par- " take of their abundance. The rich eat and " drink to exceſs; and the poor have no re- " freſhment. What? have ye not houſes for " meals and feaſts? or deſpiſe ye the Church " of GOD, uſing it for theſe common pur- " poſes? and even for intemperance? at the " ſame time inſulting the wants of your poor " brethren? Is it thus that ye celebrate a " religious feaſt, deſigned for the demonſtra- " tion and improvement of inward charity and " outward beneficence? Is it thus that ye " celebrate the Holy Communion of the body " and blood of Chriſt, broken and ſhed for all " men?"

The Apoſtle then proceeds to ſtate the true nature of the Holy Communion, as it was ordained by Chriſt; not connected with any Feaſt of Charity, which made no part of it; and, thus abuſed and perverted, was ſoon to ceaſe. " The Lord Jeſus, the ſame night in which he " was betrayed, took bread: and when he had " given thanks, he brake it, and ſaid, Take, " eat; this is my body which is broken for " you:" this repreſents my body: " this do " in remembrance of me. After the ſame

" manner alſo he took the cup, when he had " ſupped:* ſaying, This cup is the new teſ- " tament (or covenant) in my blood:" it repreſents my blood, which obtains for you from GOD a new covenant of mercy: " this do ye, " as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of " me."† From this account of the appointment and deſign of the Holy Communion, he ſhews that the Corinthians celebrated this ordinance unduly and profanely. They "eat this " bread, and drank this cup, of the Lord un- " worthily." For, if they eat and drank them after an uncharitable, diſorderly, and exceſſive, feaſt, they did not receive them with a reverence due to Repreſentations of the body and blood of Chriſt. If they eat and drank them IN ſuch a feaſt, they received them, not as Repreſentations of the body and blood of Chriſt, but as common meat and drink; not to commemorate the death of Chriſt, but to ſatisfy their hunger and thirſt, even to intemperance; not in religious fellowſhip with their poorer brethren, but with neglect and contempt of them.

* To diſtinguiſh this cup from the cup at the Paſchal Supper: ſee Luke xxii. 17, compare v. 20.

† 1 Cor. xi. 23—25.

This then was the point, wherein the Corinthians "eat the bread, and drank the cup, of "the Lord unworthily." "They did not diſ-"cern the Lord's body:" that is, they did not ſee and conſider, that the ſacramental bread and wine, were Figures and Repreſentations of his body and blood; and, therefore, to be diſtinguiſhed and ſeparated from common food, and to be received with ſingular reverence. For this reaſon they were "guilty of "the body and blood of the Lord:" treating with diſreſpect the holy things which Repreſented his body and blood, they were greatly wanting in reverence to their Lord Himſelf: abuſing and profaning the Memorials of his death, they ſeemed to think lightly, or would ſoon learn to do ſo, of his death itſelf; of his ſufferings and atonement: in ſome ſenſe, "cru-"cifying to themſelves the Son of God "afreſh, and counting the blood of the co-"venant an unholy thing."* They, therefore, "eat and drank damnation to them-"ſelves." You are to obſerve that the original word in this place, rendered in our Engliſh Bible, Damnation, means Judgment, or Sentence of puniſhment of any kind, whether

* Heb. vi. 6, and x. 29.

the punishment be inflicted by GOD or man; if inflicted by GOD, whether in this world, or the world to come. You will find the word in this place, so rendered in the margin of our Bible.* The English word itself, Damnation, or Condemnation, at first meant, each, the same thing; namely, Judgment, or Sentence of punishment of any kind; although, by long use, Damnation is come to signify sentence of eternal punishment, to be inflicted by GOD in another world; and Condemnation more generally signifies sentence of punishment to be inflicted by man in this world. "They eat "and drank to themselves;" that is, by so eating and drinking they drew down upon themselves, 'judgment, or sentence of punish-"ment." Of what nature this judgment or punishment was, and where to be inflicted, is manifest from the words immediately following: "for this cause many are weak and sick-"ly among you, and many sleep:"† that is, are dead. Now, weakness, and sickliness, and death, are punishments inflicted in this present world. The Apostle says further, this judgment or punishment, this weakness and sickliness among them, and death in its approaches,

* As also verse 34. † Verse 30.

may inſtruct and reform them; may teach them to be more attentive to their religious duties; and ſo in the end promote their eternal ſalvation. For he adds, "when we are thus "judged," (or puniſhed) "we are chaſtened" and diſciplined "by the Lord, that we may "not be condemned" eternally "with the" wicked, unreformed, "world."* Now, a judgment, or puniſhment, which thus corrects and improves us, and ſo may prevent our eternal condemnation, cannot at any rate be that eternal condemnation itſelf: nor can we ſuppoſe that even thoſe who ſlept, or died, penitent, under this correcting and improving judgment, or puniſhment, were condemned eternally with the wicked, unreformed, world.

You perceive then, that the peculiar fault of the Corinthians, cenſured by the Apoſtle, cannot eaſily be committed by any partaker of the Holy Communion in the preſent age. The celebration of the Lord's Supper is not now accompanied by any Feaſt of Charity; which gave occaſion to the diſorder and profaneneſs in the Church of Corinth. The bread and wine, as received by us, cannot ſatisfy hunger and thirſt, or provoke intemperance.

* Verſe 32.

There is not one among us who does not "diſcern in them the Lord's body:" who does not plainly and clearly underſtand, that the bread broken, and the wine poured out, are memorials of the body and blood of Chriſt, wounded and ſhed for him on the croſs. There is no ſerious perſon, who does not receive this bread and wine with reverence and godly fear: nor does any one think of them as food for the body, but as inſtruments ordained by Chriſt, for the ſtrengthening and refreſhing of the ſoul.

You obſerve, alſo, that although the Corinthians were guilty of a great abuſe of the Feaſt of Charity, and a groſs inattention to the nature of the Holy Communion; faults, which, if not corrected, would lead them to other wickedneſs, and end in eternal condemnation; yet the immediate puniſhment denounced by the Apoſtle, was ſome evil relating to the preſent world; inflicted, either by miracle, or in the ordinary courſe of providence. It appears, moreover, that this evil, far from being a ground of deſpair, or a motive to neglect the ordinances of religion, was calculated to awaken the ſufferers, and the witneſſes of their ſufferings, to a right appre-

henſion of their chriſtian duties, and to incite them to a more careful and complete obedience.

You ſee, therefore, that no perſon in this congregation, nor any chriſtian in this age and country, is in danger of profaning the Lord's Supper as the Corinthians did: and that, if any one (which GOD forbid) did ſo profane it, the puniſhment threatened in this paſſage is not Eternal Damnation.

BUT Chriſtians of every age and country may "eat the bread, and drink the cup, of the "Lord unworthily; and ſo be guilty of" irreverence to "the body and blood of the "Lord:" by profaning theſe memorials of his death, they may forfeit the benefits of it; and increaſe the meaſure of their guilt and puniſhment. Accordingly our Communion Service uſes the exhortation of St. Paul; and calls upon every perſon "to examine himſelf before he "eats of that bread, and drinks of that cup."

This examination relates to your Faith, and your Obedience.

As to your Faith: you are to look back to your Baptiſmal Profeſſion, ratified by you at your Confirmation, and renewed by you when-

ever you repeat the Apoſtle's Creed. You, who are conſtant worſhipers in the houſe of GOD, have no reaſon to doubt your Faith.

As to your Obedience: you are to look back to your Baptiſmal Promiſe, ratified by you at your Confirmation, and renewed daily in your prayers. Your promiſe was "to keep GOD's "holy will and commandments," as declared by his Son Jeſus Chriſt, "and to walk in the "ſame all the days of your life:" The Will of GOD is declared, as you know, in the Holy Bible. It is briefly expreſſed in the Ten Commandments. It is further explained in the Precepts of the Goſpel. Our bleſſed Lord has thus repreſented the ſubſtance of the Ten Commandments: "thou ſhalt love the Lord thy "GOD with all thy heart; and thou ſhalt love "thy neighbour as thyſelf:"* dividing our moral obligations into two branches; our duty towards GOD, and our duty towards our neighbour. Each of theſe duties are explained, with admirable clearneſs and comprehenſion, in our Catechiſm. St. Paul repreſents the Precepts of the Goſpel, as "teaching us to live "ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly:"† which words ſuggeſt a convenient diviſion of our

* Matth. xxii. 37—40. † Titus ii. 12.

moral obligations, as explained and improved by the Goſpel, into three branches; our duty towards GOD, our neighbour, and ourſelves. According to either of theſe diviſions, our moral obligations are the ſame: inaſmuch as our duty towards ourſelves is always a part of our duty towards GOD, and generally a part of our duty towards our neighbour. Our Baptiſmal Promiſe, therefore, binds us to the duties following; Perpetual Reverence of GOD, with thankfulneſs for all his goodneſs, and eſpecially for the pardon of ſin through Jeſus Chriſt, the aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit, and the hope of everlaſting happineſs: Univerſal Obedience to the Will of GOD: particularly, love to all men, juſt and kind behaviour to all with whom we have any dealings: temperance in every gratification which is allowed by the law of Chriſt, and abſtinence from every gratification which is forbidden by it.

If you have ſincerely endeavoured to perform theſe duties, you are worthy "to eat of "that bread, and to drink of that cup." If you have neglected any of them, repent, amend, and pray for pardon, and grace to perſevere. You will then become worthy: "draw near

"with faith, and take this holy ſacrament to "your comfort."* But if any of you have neglected theſe duties, and reſolve to neglect them; if you have walked in the paths of ſin, and continue in them; ſtop ſhort, I beſeech you, and aſk yourſelf in the name of GOD, whither you are going? whether you chooſe death rather than life? for the way of ſin "in-"clineth unto death, and its paths unto the "dead."† In this undetermined ſtate of your mind, and in this perilous ſituation of your ſoul, I cannot adviſe you to come to the Holy Communion. At the ſame time, aim not, I entreat you, to ſatisfy your conſcience with thus reverently withdrawing from the Holy Table. Say not in your heart, "if I offend "GOD by my life, I do not affront his ma-"jeſty by falſe profeſſions, and by a profane "abuſe of his ordinances." Rather conſider it as a grievous puniſhment of ſin, that it deprives you of the means of grace: and thus repelling you from the Altar, ſeems to prefigure your excluſion from the Heavenly Sanctuary: "Depart from me, all ye workers of "iniquity."‡

* Communion Service. † Prov. ii. 18.

‡ Luke xiii. 27.

"But, beloved, we are perſuaded better "things of you, and things which accompany "ſalvation, though we thus ſpeak."* You have, we truſt, "the teſtimony of your Con- "ſcience, that with ſimplicity and godly ſin- "cerity you have had your converſation in the "world."† Liſten to Every ſuggeſtion of that heavenly monitor. Perform this beneficial duty, as well as others. You are hearers of the word of GOD, and partakers of his wor- ſhip: be partakers alſo of his Sacrament. Set not the example of a Chriſtian perſon, refuſing to join in an act of worſhip, which is "a badge "and token of Chriſtian men's profeſſion." Set not the dangerous example of a well- inſtructed Chriſtian, diſtinguiſhed by his edu- cation, his probity, his fortune, or his office, (perhaps with the Enſigns of his office before him,) ſet not to a congregation the dange- rous example of turning away from the Lord's Table. You will reflect that your everlaſting happineſs, the perfection of your nature in that unknown ſtate to which we are haſtening, de- pends upon your obedience to our gracious Maſter, who calls you, by his word and mi- niſtry, to offer him this eaſy tribute of Duty

* Heb. vi. 9. † 2 Cor. i. 12.

and Affection. You will conſider the uncertainty of human life; the various unexpected accidents, by which we are daily ſummoned from this ſtate of trial to a ſtate of retribution. It will occur to you that every neglected opportunity, every ſlighted invitation to the Holy Communion, may poſſibly be the Laſt: and, therefore, you will not think it prudent to paſs by any. You will rather ſay with Holy David, "I will waſh my hands in innocency, O "Lord! I will, in the whole conduct of my "life and manners, humbly endeavour to do "thy will;" and ſo will I go to thine Altar:* concluding the wiſe reſolution with this ſerious, Apoſtolical, conſideration; "behold now is "the accepted time: behold now is the day "of ſalvation."†

We have this great encouragement in the performance of our religious duties, that we are under the direction of a merciful and gracious Being, who impoſes no ſervices, but ſuch as contribute to our perfection: that the end of all his diſpenſations, the object of his ever-watchful providence, is to lead us, in the way of his commandments, and by the guidance of his Spirit, through this varied ſcene of good

* Pſal. xxvi. 6. † 2 Cor. vi. 2.

and evil, through the innocent ſatisfactions, and the unavoidable calamities, of life, to a ſtate of happineſs, pure and unalterable. We know that, whilſt in obedience to the injunctions of our Bleſſed Redeemer, we are commemorating his Paſſion upon Earth, he is pleading the merits of it in Heaven: and that, if we ſincerely endeavour to live according to his will, we have a merciful High Prieſt, who maketh atonement for our infirmities; and will, in his due time, and by his appointed means, bring us to himſelf.

SERMON XIX.

ON THE FALL AND RESTORATION OF MAN.

GENESIS I. 27.

GOD CREATED MAN IN HIS OWN IMAGE: IN THE IMAGE OF GOD CREATED HE HIM.

THE Holy Bible repreſents man in three different ſtates. The firſt began at the Creation, and continued to the Fall. It was a ſtate of immortality, innocence, and happineſs. The ſecond began at the Fall, and will continue to the end of the world. It is a ſtate of mortality, imperfect in holineſs and happineſs. The third will begin at the end of the world, and will laſt for ever. It is a ſtate of immortality; if he chooſe and act rightly, perfect in holineſs and happineſs.

That man was created in a better ſtate than that in which we now behold him, is a reaſonable ſuppoſition; obſcurely repreſented in Heathen fables, which were founded on the tradition of the early ages. That man will one day paſs into a different ſtate from the preſent, better or worſe, as he ſhall here behave himſelf,

is an inſtinctive apprehenſion of nature, and a notion handed down, probably, from the firſt parents. It has been found among civilized nations and barbarous tribes. It has been the hereditary perſuaſion of the unlearned, and the well-founded opinion of the ſcholar. But to have authentic information and aſſurance on either of theſe important points, was a bleſſing granted only to the worſhipers of GOD in the firſt ages, to the Hebrew nation under Moſes and the prophets, and to the Chriſtian world after the miniſtry of the Meſſiah. To thoſe great and intereſting queſtions, "whence came "I? whither am I going? what was man at "firſt? and what will he be hereafter?" the Chriſtian can anſwer with a clearneſs and certainty, unknown to the greateſt and wiſeſt in the unenlightened nations: becauſe GOD hath inſtructed him by his written word.

This divine information begins in the paſſage which I have recited, and others immediately following, in the book of Geneſis. It increaſes in ſtrength and light, as you go through the ſeveral periods of the Patriarchal hiſtory; as you examine the principal inſtitutions of the Moſaic law; as you read, in the prophets, the gracious deſigns of GOD; as you

ſee, in the records of the Evangeliſts, the execution of his plan of mercy upon earth; and as you receive, in the diſcourſes of our Lord and his Apoſtles, the promiſes of its final accompliſhment in heaven.

"GOD created man in his own image." As we have no clear conception of the nature of GOD, any further than that it comprehends all perfection, we cannot explain preciſely, what it is, for a creature to be made in his image. However, as GOD is a ſpirit, we know that man can reſemble him only in the faculties of his ſoul. We may, therefore, venture to conclude, that this reſemblance conſiſted in the powers of the underſtanding, to diſcern what is true, and what is good; in the powers of the will, freely to chooſe and embrace them: both together amounting to a clear apprehenſion, and a decided love, of truth and virtue.* Leſs than this can ſcarce come up to the deſcription of a creature made in the image of the Creator: and if to this we add immortality,† we need not allow more, to make him perfect in his kind; worthy of his Author, and ſuitable to the high character, under which he hath been pleaſed to repreſent him. Moreover, in our

* See Epheſ. iv. 24, and Coloſ. iii. 10. † See Wiſdom ii. 23.

own degenerate nature we find theſe qualities, however abated and imperfect. We diſcern truth and good, though we often miſtake for them their contraries. We purſue them, though not with a determined and univerſal choice. We extend an anxious thought beyond the grave, and have natural longings after immortality. In this ruinous condition of human nature, we have before us, upon the page of Holy Scripture, the plan and hiſtory of the ancient building; and, with our own eyes, we view the remains: they agree ſo well together, that they explain and confirm each other. The whole repreſentation removes a difficulty, which has ever puzzled the wiſeſt in the unenlightened, and the unbelieving, world: namely, how man, the work of God, of whom, as of "every thing elſe which he made, he "pronounced that it was good;"* how man became leſs perfect than the reſt of the creation; not, like them, anſwering the end of his being; not conforming to the law of his nature; not purſuing his true happineſs; prone to error and wickedneſs; ſubject to unavoidable miſery. How this diſorder happened, his true hiſtory inform us.

* Gen. i. 31.

"And the Lord GOD took the man, and put "him into the garden of Eden, to dreſs it and "to keep it. And the Lord GOD commanded "the man, ſaying, of every tree in the gar-"den thou mayeſt freely eat: but of the tree "of the knowledge of good and evil, thou "ſhalt not eat: for in the day that thou eateſt "thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die."* It appears agreeable to our notions of equity, that GOD, the maker and governor of the world, having endued man with an excellent nature, capable of revering and obeying him, ſhould require ſome teſt and ſpecial proof of his reverence and obedience. He was pleaſed to make choice of this. The ſimplicity and eaſineſs of the duty, point out the wiſdom and goodneſs of the lawgiver: "had he required ſome greater thing,"† the obligation to do it would have been the ſame. What this tree was, it would be vain, and it is needleſs, to inquire. It ſeems to be called "the tree of the knowledge of good and "evil," either from its uſe; which was to prove whether the firſt parent would be good or evil: or from its effects; which were the introduction of evil into the world, evil moral and natural, the evil of ſin, and the evil of pu-

* Gen. ii. 15—17. † 2 Kings v. 13.

niſhment; by taſting the fruit of this tree, the firſt parent came to know and feel the difference between good and evil.

God created him happy and immortal: he made theſe favours to depend upon his obedience: he gave him an underſtanding to diſtinguiſh, and a will to chooſe; he ſhewed him the connexion between the performance of his duty and the continuance of his bleſſings: he laid before him the law and the penalty.

But Eve was ſolicited by an Evil Spirit, under the form of a ſerpent, to tranſgreſs this law. The ſpirit was Satan, the principal of the fallen angels.* The ſerpent is ſuppoſed to have been a creature of a more beautiful appearance, than any animal of the kind which hath ſince been ſeen in the world: far ſurpaſſing the "flying, fiery, or glittering, ſerpent," mentioned in Iſaiah.† The curſe inflicted on him juſtifies this notion: "on thy belly ſhalt "thou go, and duſt ſhalt thou eat;" which implies that he was, before the curſe, of a better form, and in a better ſituation. Some have thought that Satan might inveſt this noble creature with a kind of Angelic radiance, and

* See John viii. 44. Rev. xii. 9. Jude 6.

† Iſaiah xiv. 29.

give him the ſeducing ſemblance of a Heavenly Meſſenger, perhaps of one of the Seraphs which attended the Divine Preſence; tranſforming himſelf, as in after days, into an "Angel of light."* "Eve was beguiled thro' "his" appearance and "ſubtilty:"† ſhe eat of the forbidden fruit: ſhe gave to Adam, and he eat.

Thus did the firſt parents diſobey their Creator, and forfeit the perfections of their nature. The immediate effect of their tranſgreſſion was the experimental knowledge of good and evil: "the eyes of them both were opened:" they knew that they had been good, but now were wicked; happy, but now wretched. "They "knew that they were naked:"‡ conſcious that they were ſtripped of their robe of innocence, they became capable of ſhame.§ Moreover, a cold ſhivering, perhaps, ſeized their bodies, now become mortal and corruptible, at the ſame time that remorſe, and ſhame, and terror, aſſailed their minds.

They afterwards received this awful ſentence. "The Lord GOD ſaid unto Adam; "becauſe thou haſt hearkened to the voice of

* 2 Cor. xi. 14. See Luke x. 18—20.
† 2 Cor. xi. 3.
‡ Gen. iii. 7.
§ See Gen. ii. 25.

" thy wife, and haſt eaten of the tree, of " which I commanded thee, ſaying, thou ſhalt " not eat of it; curſed is the ground for thy " ſake: in ſorrow ſhalt thou eat of it all the " days of thy life. Thorns alſo and thiſtles " ſhall it bring forth to thee; and thou ſhalt " eat the herb of the field. In the ſweat of " thy face ſhalt thou eat bread, till thou re- " turn unto the ground: for out of it waſt " thou taken: for duſt thou art, and unto duſt " ſhalt thou return."* This melancholy doom comprehends two particulars: we cannot err in the interpretation: the evils denounced have been experienced by all the generations of men, from Adam to this day: they are felt by us; and they will go down to our lateſt poſterity. The firſt: that the earth ſhall not, as we may conclude it did before the curſe, produce the neceſſaries of life without painful labour: "curſed is the ground for thy ſake," for thy puniſhment: "in ſorrow ſhalt thou eat " of it;" with wearineſs of body, and anxiety of mind: "thorns alſo and thiſtles ſhall it bring " forth to thee;" it ſhall add to thy labour to check and ſubdue them: "and thou ſhalt eat " the herb of the field;" not the choice fruits of the garden of Eden, but the common pro-

* Gen. iii. 17—19.

ductions of the earth: the leſs uſeful, or noxious, weed ſhall ſpring up of its own accord; but the herbs which produce the neceſſaries and comforts of life ſhall call for labour and cultivation: "in the ſweat of thy face ſhalt "thou eat bread." The ſecond particular, and the principal one, was, that he ſhall die: that his body ſhall be reſolved into the materials of which it was compounded: "till thou "return unto the ground; for out of it waſt "thou taken; for duſt thou art, and unto "duſt ſhalt thou return." This part of his ſentence comprehends alſo the many pains, infirmities, and decays, which vex and wear this mortal body, and bring it to diſſolution.

Such was the fall of the firſt man, and ſuch his puniſhment. He diſobeyed the command of GOD: he became ſubject to painful labour, to ſickneſs, to death. He was ſo far from being able to atone for his firſt tranſgreſſion, that, his underſtanding being darkened, and his will corrupted, he was liable to add ſin to ſin. This fallen nature, this mortality of body, and weakneſs of mind, went down to his children and poſterity. Abel was mortal, and Cain was his murderer. The ſcripture hiſtory

of his deſcendants before the flood and after it, is a tale of human frailty and calamity. And the annals of all ſucceeding generations, abound with melancholy examples of crime and error; and preſent to us, at beſt, a continued ſcene of defective virtue and uncertain happineſs.

GOD in judgment remembered mercy. "The Lord GOD ſaid unto the ſerpent; be-"cauſe thou haſt done this, thou art curſed "above all cattle, and above every beaſt of "the field: upon thy belly ſhalt thou go, and "duſt ſhalt thou eat all the days of thy life. "And I will put enmity between thee and "the woman, and between thy ſeed and her "ſeed: it ſhall bruiſe thy head, and thou ſhalt "bruiſe his heel."* In this declaration, GOD addreſſes the Evil Spirit; though the words have an alluſion to the ſerpent, whoſe form he had aſſumed: they may be thus paraphraſed: "becauſe thou haſt done this, becauſe thou "haſt tempted man to diſobey me, the ſerpent "which thou haſt made the inſtrument of thy "wickedneſs, ſhall be a perpetual monument "of my diſpleaſure.†. His form and nature, "once noble and comely, ſhall be debaſed; no

* Gen. iii. 14, 15.

† See Exod. xxi. 28.

" longer erect on the earth, or flying in the
" air; upon his belly ſhall he go, and he
" ſhall lick the duſt: and the ſight of him ſhall
" put Adam and his poſterity in mind of their
" ſin, and of their fall. The children of Eve
" ſhall have an unconquerable abhorrence of
" this animal, and it of them: it ſhall wound
" them; and they ſhall purſue it to deſtruc-
" tion. But this enmity between the ſeed of
" the woman and the ſeed of the ſerpent, ſhall
" be only an emblem, and a ſhadow, of a
" more important and unequal conflict. It
" ſhall prefigure that final victory, which, at
" ſome future ſeaſon, one born of a woman
" ſhall obtain over the power of Satan. The
" heel, indeed, of this ſon of a virgin ſhall be
" bruiſed: he ſhall be a man of ſorrows and
" acquainted with grief:* his human nature
" ſhall ſuffer pain and death. But he ſhall
" bruiſe the head of the enemy: he ſhall de-
" ſtroy his works, and his dominion:† he ſhall
" procure, for all the race of Adam, pardon
" of ſin, recovery from death, and grace to
" overcome the propenſities of a corrupted
" nature."

* Iſaiah liii. 3. † See Heb. ii. 14, 15.

THUS ended the ſtate of innocence: giving way to the ſecond ſtate of man, which began at the fall, and will continue to the end of the world. Of this ſtate we learn the events and circumſtances from the ſacred writers, from profane hiſtory, and from our own experience. We find it a ſtate of mortality, imperfect in holineſs and in happineſs. Frailty, pain, and death, attend the body: error and wickedneſs afflict the mind. We read the humbling narrative of idolatry, ſavage cruelty, perſonal vices; offences againſt every duty of man, to GOD, his neighbour, and himſelf: not more than eight righteous perſons to eſcape a univerſal deluge; nor ten to redeem a devoted city. We ſee nations and individuals, conſpiring to execute and aggravate the divine ſentence paſſed upon their fallen race: depriving each other of the remaining bleſſings of nature: laying waſte the produce of their art and labour, ſpent in framing a ſhelter againſt unfriendly elements, or in the cultivation of an unkindly ſoil: tormenting a body already condemned to ſuffer; and prematurely haſtening its threatened diſſolution into duſt. In more happy ſituations, and in more peaceful times, man ſtill diſcovers, in his moral conduct,

plain marks of a corrupted nature, while he feels, in his enjoyments and his ſufferings, the evidences of an imperfect ſtate. Sickneſs and death purſue him univerſally: labour of mind and body are his unfailing lot. The unwearied goodneſs of the Creator has, indeed, left to him many ſubſtantial bleſſings. He has many comforts adapted to the neceſſities of his body; many entertainments ſuited to the activity and dignity of his mind. But theſe ſupports and enjoyments are all unequal to his wiſhes; dependent upon a thouſand accidents; and limited, with his earthly being, to a ſhort, uncertain, date. He finds, indeed, within his breaſt the ſeeds of virtue: they are cheriſhed by the kindly influence of the Goſpel: they are raiſed to ſome maturity by attentive cultivation, and the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit. But ſtill, his nature is like "the ground "which the Lord hath curſed;"* "thorns alſo "and thiſtles ſhall it bring forth to thee:" he has within him the ſeeds and principles of vice: and many evil propenſities check him, and retard him, and draw him backward, in the path of duty. In a word, he feels himſelf an imperfect creature: in his mind and in his body,

* Gen. v. 29.

in his faculties and in his habits, in his virtues and in his enjoyments, in himſelf and in the world around him, all is a mixture of good and evil. It is a conſolation to him, if he duly conſider it, that he is aſſured that he is a fallen creature: becauſe, as the divine goodneſs originally formed him in a better ſtate, he may entertain a reaſonable hope, that the ſame unceaſing goodneſs may one day reſtore him to his native bleſſings. But when he is told that this Reſtoration is actually the plan of the divine counſels; that it was, from the beginning, the object of the divine adminiſtration; that a Saviour and a Teacher hath appeared upon earth to lead him back to immortality, holineſs, and happineſs; will he not joyfully liſten to ſuch welcome revelations? will he not view with tranſport "the way to the tree of Life, no "longer guarded by fiery Cherubim?"* and haſten on rejoicing to the opening gate of a Heavenly Paradiſe?

The time approaches, when this ſtate of mortality, imperfect in holineſs and happineſs, will conclude: introducing the third ſtate of man, which will begin at the end of the world, and will continue for ever. It will be a ſtate of

* Gen. iii. 24.

immortality; if he chooſe and act rightly, a ſtate of perfect holineſs and happineſs.

Although this ſtate do not begin before the end of the world; nor diſplay all its glories, before the day of Judgment; yet every pious perſon, at his departure from the body, enters immediately on a condition preparatory to it, and taſtes a large portion of its tranſcendent happineſs. "Lazarus died, and was carried "by the Angels into Abraham's boſom."* The penitent believer on the croſs was, on that ſame day, to be with his Redeemer in Paradiſe.† St. Paul expected, as ſoon as he departed, to be with Chriſt.‡ In like manner do all good Chriſtians deceaſed reſt in peace and happineſs, in the manſions prepared for them by their gracious Saviour:§ waiting, in ſure and joyful hope, for the "perfect conſumma-"tion of bliſs, both in body and ſoul,"‖ which they will receive at the laſt day.

This final ſtate is thus repreſented in the Holy Scriptures. A ſtate of immortality: the ſoul being reunited to the body glorified.¶ A ſtate of holineſs; exempt from temptation

* Luke xvi. 22.
† Luke xxiii. 43.
‡ Phil. i. 23.
§ John xiv. 2.
‖ Burial Service.
¶ Phil. iii. 21. 1 Cor. xiii. 12

or inclination to ſin. A ſtate of happineſs; free from all remorſe or anxiety of mind, and from every evil incident to a mortal body. We ſhall have greater capacity, and larger ſcope, for knowledge. We ſhall be received into the abodes of bliſs, called by a figure "the hea-" venly Jeruſalem, among an innumerable " company of Angels, and the ſpirits of juſt " men made perfect."* "We ſhall ſee GOD " as he is:"† we ſhall have a greater knowledge of his nature: we ſhall in conſequence offer him a more complete reverence and obedience, and enjoy his preſence and favour in a degree and manner not now to be conceived. " We ſhall be like him:" we ſhall once more " bear his image"‡ in holineſs§ and immortality.‖

The Holy Scriptures are very conciſe in the hiſtory of the Firſt ſtate of man. They ſimply inſtruct us, that he was created perfect, and became imperfect by his tranſgreſſion. We, therefore, conclude that more ample information was not neceſſary, "to make us wiſe " unto ſalvation."¶ They are large and cir-

* Heb. xii. 22, 23.
† 1 John iii. 2.
‡ 1 Cor. xv. 49.
§ See Eph. iv. 24.
‖ See Wiſdom ii. 23.
¶ 2 Tim. iii. 15.

cumſtantial in the hiſtory of the Second ſtate. It is the hiſtory of his reſtoration; gradually unfolding to ſucceſſive generations, the means by which it is accompliſhed, and the conditions upon which every one may obtain its bleſſings. They are clear and decided in the prophecy of the Third ſtate: affording us a bright proſpect of its glories, as an encouragement to our obedience.

Let us adore the Divine Goodneſs in every ſtate of man. The Firſt ſtate preſents to us the Creator of the univerſe, calling man into Being; giving him an excellent nature, endowed with reaſon, holineſs, and immortality; granting him dominion over this lower world; and placing him in a choſen portion of it. In the Second ſtate, we ſee "the Judge of the "earth,"* providing for the Reſtoration of his fallen creatures, by a wonderful diſpenſation of juſtice and mercy. We behold the Son of GOD, becoming a propitiation for ſin;† offering to us the conditions of pardon and happineſs; inviting us to accept the terms of reconciliation; enlightening our underſtandings; influencing our wills; ſoliciting every paſſion of our nature, our love, our hopes, our fears;

* Gen. xviii. 25. Pſal. xciv. 2. † 1 John iv. 10.

leading us, by every incitement that is ſuited to a free and reaſonable creature, to moral perfection and eternal happineſs. The Third ſtate opens to our view, in prophetic viſion, a reſurrection to a life immortal; free from every infirmity and ſuffering now incident to ſoul or body; bleſſed with pleaſures which we cannot now conceive, and with enjoyments which we now experience, heightened and perfected; a nearer approach to the Firſt Cauſe of all things, to the eternal ſource of truth and goodneſs; a communication with ſuperior beings, more enlightened, and more virtuous, than ourſelves; an intercourſe with our fellow-creatures, with the wiſe and good of every generation; with thoſe who have lived divided from us, by an interval of ages, or by diſtance of country; with thoſe whom we have known imperfectly, by the monuments of their wiſdom, or the fame of their virtues; with thoſe whom we have ſeen, and loved, and reverenced; who have been ſeparated from us by the viciſſitudes of life, by the ordinary decays of nature, or by the ſpecial call of providence.

To live here under the gracious protection of the Almighty, with the hope of ſuch a bleſſed immortality! What language can expreſs

our conceptions of the goodneſs of GOD? Let us look up to him with adoration and thankſgiving: let us obey his laws: let us await the ſure performance of his "precious promiſes:"* knowing that, if we fail not in faith and obedience, we ſhall one day be admitted to a ſcene far better than the firſt paradiſe; paſſing from a ſtate of trial and precarious virtue, to a ſtate of perfection and ſecurity.

* 2 Pet. i. 4.

SERMON XX.

ON THE GREAT SALVATION, AND THE DANGER OF NEGLECTING IT.

HEBREWS II. 3.

HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE IF WE NEGLECT SO GREAT SALVATION?

THE Salvation here mentioned is the Redemption of mankind: a deliverance from all the evils of the Fall: a reſtoration to immortality, holineſs, and happineſs. It is, in every view, a great ſalvation.

Firſt. It reſtores man to immortality; to the perpetual exiſtence of his whole nature, a body united to a ſoul. Life was the free gift of the Creator. The condition of its continuance was obedience: "in the day that thou "eateſt thereof thou ſhalt die."* The ſentence of death followed the tranſgreſſion; and it was executed upon the firſt parent and his children. The body returned to the earth from whence it was taken; the ſoul departed, they knew not how, or whither. In this compleat

* Gen. ii. 17.

diſſolution of the human nature, when one conſtituent part was evidently deſtroyed, and the other left not any viſible traces of exiſtence, (however probable,) no idea of a reunion could ever have offered itſelf without a revelation from heaven. But Adam had been conſoled with a prophetic intimation, "that "the ſeed of the woman ſhould bruiſe the ſerpent's head;" and his deſcendants, in a future age, ſaw the Son of Man triumph over death, and received a token and promiſe of their own reſurrection and immortality.

Secondly. The greatneſs of this ſalvation appears, in that it offers to us the pardon of our ſins. The perfect obedience of our whole life is due to the Creator; no one act of duty can atone for the neglect of another. It is manifeſt, therefore, that we can claim no pardon for the paſt, by any good behaviour of the preſent, or profeſſions for the future. For pardon, therefore, we muſt look up to the goodneſs of GOD: we muſt, at the ſame time, remember the holineſs of his nature, and the juſtice of his government. How far his goodneſs may abate or mitigate his juſtice, at what point theſe attributes may meet in mercy, it was impoſſible for natural reaſon to diſcover,

This was a queſtion never to be reſolved without a ſpecial revelation of his will: yet, upon it depended every hope and fear of an accountable, imperfect, creature. Now the Goſpel of Chriſt is an expreſs declaration of mercy. It informs us that the goodneſs of God will be extended to his repenting creatures; it invites them to reformation with the hope of pardon.

Thirdly. The greatneſs of this ſalvation appears in the method by which it is procured. The eternal Son of God took upon him the human nature, and, in that nature, ſuffered, and atoned for the ſins of men. We may eſtimate the value of the end by the dignity of the means. As the divine wiſdom hath choſen this ſurpriſing plan of mercy, it gives us an awful and affecting view of his juſtice, and of his goodneſs; of his juſtice, which required ſo high a ſacrifice; of his goodneſs, which permitted and accepted it. The doctrine of atonement by the blood of Chriſt is a theme which ſtrikes us with aſtoniſhment: it is a diſpenſation which "the angels deſire to look into."* But while we ſee it prefigured by Moſes, foretold by the Prophets, recorded by the Evangeliſts, preached by the Apoſtles, let no man

* 1 Pet. i. 12.

be moved by the unbounded goodneſs of his Saviour, to miſinterpret his word or diſbelieve his meſſengers. It is with reaſon that he is "amazed at the ſtrangeneſs of his ſalva-"tion;"* but let his wonder increaſe his humility, and inflame his gratitude. Let the greatneſs of the gift diſpoſe him to fulfil the conditions upon which it is offered; let it ſtrengthen his reſolutions and vows of obedience.

Fourthly. That we may fulfil the conditions of this great ſalvation, GOD hath granted us the aſſiſtance of his Holy Spirit. That the human conſtitution has a fatal biaſs to evil, intellectual and moral, that the underſtanding is expoſed to error, and the affections prone to ſin, is a fact indiſputable. The ſcriptures acquaint us that theſe infirmities are not original; but flow from a corrupted nature. "GOD "ſaw every thing that he had made, and be-"hold it was very good." He "created man "in his own image, after his likeneſs:"† and whatever was the complete extent of that image and likeneſs, a part of it was ſurely that moral rectitude, that clear apprehenſion and practice of duty, which adorned him in his

* Wiſd. v. 2. † Gen. i. 31, 26, 27.

ſtate of innocence; but has never been found, one only excepted, in any of his deſcendants. As the Saviour of mankind hath recovered us from death, which was the judicial puniſhment of the firſt tranſgreſſion, ſo hath he granted us a ſovereign remedy, to heal the corruption of nature, which was the natural conſequence of it. He hath given us his Holy Spirit to "help our infirmities;"* to enlighten our underſtandings in the purſuit of truth; to incline our wills and affections to the practice of virtue.

Thus hath he reſtored the fallen race to their native bleſſings of life and holineſs; he hath given them the proſpect of immortality, and the means of juſtification. The ſentence of death is not reverſed; but the effect of it is removed by a reſurrection. The corruption of nature remains, and we are ſtill ſinful creatures: but the guilt of ſin is taken away (conditionally) by his ſacrifice, and the dominion of it by his grace. We are moved and aſſiſted in repentance and reformation; we are ſtrengthened, in every virtuous inclination, and in every ſincere endeavour. We are encouraged with the hope of attaining perfection

* Rom. viii. 26.

and ſecurity, in a future ſtate, where ſin and death will be no more.

Fifthly. The greatneſs of this ſalvation will further appear, if we conſider the wiſdom and equity of the conditions of it; which are, faith and obedience; to believe the declarations of GOD delivered in the Goſpel, and to obey his will. To believe a revelation which is clearly and explicitly propounded to us from the Supreme Being, is ſo much an act of reaſon, and a debt of homage to his holineſs and ſovereignty, that the contrary would be madneſs and rebellion. That the Goſpel, with all its preparations and appendages, is ſuch a revelation, we have a ſeries of evidence, and a cloud of witneſſes, which nothing can reſiſt. To obey the will of GOD, who is the eternal fountain and pattern of right and truth, who is alſo the Creator and Governour of the univerſe, muſt be the perfection and happineſs of every reaſonable being. The commands of GOD delivered in the Goſpel, are manifeſtly conducive to the perfection and happineſs of man. His reaſon approves them as "holy, "juſt, and good;"* and his experience ſhews them to be adapted to his nature, and pro-

* Rom. vii. 12.

ductive of his welfare. The conditions of ſalvation propoſed by the Goſpel are, therefore, the very law of reaſon and nature; illuſtrated and improved by a heavenly teacher; enforced by his authority, recommended by his love, and by the promiſe of his eternal favour. It were eaſy to enlarge upon the native tendency of the Chriſtian Virtues to promote every proper object of human wiſhes; the health of the body, the clearneſs of the underſtanding, the tranquillity of the affections, the welfare of communities, the pleaſures of ſocial intercourſe, the ſatisfactions of ſolitude. A religion which impoſes theſe conditions of ſalvation, bears every mark of a divine original. As they are pure, and wiſe, and ſalutary, they are ſuch as we may expect from an all-perfect Lawgiver: as they are agreeable to our reaſon, and ſuited to our nature, they plainly come from the Author of our being.

Laſtly. The greatneſs of this ſalvation appears in the certainty, and the extent, of that final happineſs, which it offers in a future ſtate. For the certainty of this happineſs, we have the promiſe of God; we have the knowledge and experience of his truth and goodneſs; we reſt upon the adorable attributes

of his nature. For the extent of this happineſs---when we recollect the bounty of the Creator in the original formation of this earth, with every thing ſubſervient to its uſe and ornament; when we reflect upon man, the ſovereign inhabitant; his ample endowments and ſplendid ſituation in a ſtate of innocence; further, when we conſider his faculties and pleaſures in this degenerate ſtate; and the comforts which external nature is ſtill permitted to miniſter to him, although himſelf be "made "ſubject to vanity,"* and "the earth be "curſed for his ſake;"† upon theſe grounds, we may form a reaſonable conjecture, that the divine munificence will not be ſhortened or diminiſhed, when GOD ſhall be pleaſed to receive him into his eternal favour, and to admit him to new ſcenes of enjoyment and activity. Still more—if we turn our eyes to the ſcheme of redemption which leads him to this final ſtate; if we contemplate the miracles, the prophecies, the great events, which wait on this diſpenſation, and mark it as the peculiar care of Providence, we may well conclude, that the Conſummation will bear due proportion to the Procedure; and that the "end of our faith"‡

* Rom. viii. 20. † Gen. iii. 17. ‡ 1 Pet. i. 9.

will be a diſplay of power and goodneſs, worthy of its "Author and Finiſher."* Suitably to theſe expectations, the holy ſcriptures ſpeak of our everlaſting deſtination in the world to come, as a ſtate of glory not to be deſcribed or comprehended: ſuch as "eye hath not ſeen, "nor ear heard, neither hath the heart of "man conceived."† They repreſent it, therefore, under ſymbols and images, taken from ſuch objects in nature, or in human life, as appear moſt ſplendid or deſirable to the ſenſes, the affections, or the underſtanding: "then "ſhall the righteous ſhine forth, as the ſun; "as the brightneſs of the firmament, and as "the ſtars: inherit the kingdom prepared "for you: then ſhall I know, even as I "am known: a crown of glory, that fadeth "not away: an exceeding beyond meaſure, "and eternal, weight of glory:"‡ expreſſions, labouring under the greatneſs of the ſubject; conveying, with difficulty, an imperfect notion of that tranſcendent ſtate, when the ſoul, inveſted with a body glorious and incorruptible, ſhall be admitted to the Divine Preſence,

* Heb. xii. 2.

† 1 Cor. ii. 9.

‡ Matth. xiii. 43. Dan. xii. 3. Matth. xxv. 34. 1 Cor. xiii. 12. 1 Pet. v. 4. 2 Cor. iv. 17.

to the Saviour of mankind, to Angels, and to juſt men made perfect.*

Thus the Redemption of mankind appears to be a great ſalvation. It reſtores our nature to immortality: it aſſures to us the immortality of the ſoul: it procures the reſurrection and perpetuity of the body. It offers to us pardon of ſin upon repentance and reformation. This immortality and pardon are obtained by the moſt benevolent and illuſtrious means; by the incarnation and atonement of the Son of GOD. The Holy Spirit aſſiſts us in performing the conditions of this ſalvation: counterbalancing our propenſity to error and ſin; enabling us to diſtinguiſh clearly, and to chooſe freely, between good and evil. The conditions of this ſalvation are the original law of our nature, explained, improved, and enforced; agreeing with every notice of our reaſon, and tending invariably to our perfection and enjoyment. The end of this ſalvation, is an eternal ſtate of happineſs, worthy of the divine munificence diſplayed already in the works of creation, providence, and grace.

" How then ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect

* Heb. xii. 23.

"ſo great ſalvation?" The queſtion is the laſt appeal of the Chriſtian Religion to the Common Senſe of mankind. The Goſpel invites us to faith and obedience by the moſt noble and ingenuous motives: to faith, by the attractive influence, the irreſiſtible force, of Truth: to obedience, by the love of GOD, by the excellence of Virtue, by the hope of eternal happineſs. But if theſe prevail not, it has other arguments in reſerve, founded in the nature of things, and in the decrees of heaven. There is no middle point between the favour, and the diſpleaſure, of GOD. The ſacred writers dwell with rapture upon his mercy, his patience, and long ſuffering; but, at the ſame time, they labour to affect us deeply, as they are themſelves affected, with awful ſentiments of his holineſs and juſtice. "Knowing the terror of the "Lord, they perſuade men."* They do not fail to inform us faithfully and decidedly, what will be our portion in "the third ſtate of man, "if we do not chooſe and act rightly"† in this our ſcene of trial. If we neglect the conditions of this great ſalvation, we are loſt and undone for ever: "there remaineth no more

* 2 Cor. v. 11.

† See Sermon xix. Pages 237 and 251.

"sacrifice for sin;"* no second restoration of our nature; no Saviour to redeem us, no Holy Ghost to comfort us; no offer of pardon, holiness, and happiness. The horrors of one portion in that eternal state, are represented in terms as forcible, and under images as lively, as the glories of the other: "banishment from the presence of GOD: exclusion from the society of good men: the company of evil spirits: anguish of mind, arising from remorse of conscience, and from reflection on the misery incurred, the happiness forfeited, and hope extinguished: the torments which are represented by outer darkness, and everlasting fire: such a state of soul and body, as is figured by the worm which never dieth, and the fire which is never quenched."†

The Inspired Writers confirm these declarations, by arguments drawn from the perfections of GOD, and from the experienced measures of his government. Thus in the passage from which the text is taken, the Apostle argues with the Hebrew converts,

* Heb. x. 26.

† Math. xxv. 41, 46. 2 Thess. i. 7—10. Luke xiii. 27, 28, and xvi. 26. Matth. xxv. 30, and xxii. 11—13. Luke xvi. 24. Matth. xiii. 41, 42. Rev. xx. 11—15, and xxi. 8. Mark ix. 44.

from the well-known diſpenſations of providence to their rebellious anceſtors. "If the "word ſpoken by Angels was ſtedfaſt, and "every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience re-"ceived a juſt recompenſe of reward; how "ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſal-"vation? which at the firſt began to be "ſpoken by the Lord, and was confirmed "unto us by them that heard him; GOD "alſo bearing them witneſs, with ſigns, "and wonders." As if he had ſaid: "the "Law was delivered on mount Sinai, by "the miniſtry of Angels attending the Di-"vine Preſence.* The Almighty hath car-"ried it into execution: he hath inflicted "the puniſhments therein denounced upon "diſobedience. This is plain from the cala-"mities of our forefathers in the wilderneſs, "the captivities and diſperſions of our anceſ-"tors from this land of promiſe, and the "preſent ſubjection of our country to a fo-"reign yoke. Your ears have heard, and "your eyes have ſeen, that idolatry and im-"morality have ever received their threatened "recompenſe. The Goſpel has been deliver-"ed to us of this generation by the Son of

* See Deut. xxxiii. 2. Pſal. lxviii. 17. Acts vii. 53.

" God. If the thunderings, and the lighten-
" ings, and the ſound of the trumpet, and
" the mountain ſmoaking, and the voice of
" words,* were an aſſurance to our fathers
" that God himſelf had ſpoken to them, and
" would hereafter ſpeak to them by Moſes;
" we have the like aſſurance that God hath
" ſpoken to us by his Son, from thoſe who
" were eye witneſſes of his majeſty, when he
" received from God the father honour and
" glory, when there came ſuch a voice to him
" from the excellent glory, this is my beloved
" Son in whom I am well pleaſed.† The
" Cloudy Pillar ſtanding at the door of the ta-
" bernacle,‡ was not a more illuſtrious de-
" monſtration of the divine preſence and fa-
" vour, than the ſound from heaven, and the
" Holy Spirit deſcending upon the Apoſtles.§
" Even I, who am the leaſt of all the Apoſ-
" tles,‖ have ſeen the Lord of glory, and heard
" his voice from heaven.¶ That which we

* Exod. xx. 18, 19. Heb. xii. 18, 19.
† 2 Pet. i. 16—18.
‡ See Exod. xxxiii. 9.
§ Acts ii. 1—4.
‖ 1 Cor. xv. 9.
¶ Acts ix. 4—6. and xxii. 14.

" have ſeen and heard, declare we unto you:"* " and GOD confirms our teſtimony, by granting " ſigns and wonders to be done by our " hands.† How then will ye eſcape, if ye " neglect ſo great, ſo certain, a ſalvation?"

Thus, as a Hebrew, he reaſons with his countrymen. To his Gentile hearers, unacquainted with the divine government of the choſen people, he offers other arguments, drawn from the nature and ordinary providence of GOD.‡ " Ye men of Athens, whom " ye ignorantly worſhip, him declare I unto " you. GOD, the inviſible maker and gover- " nour of the world, dwelleth not in temples; " nor can be repreſented by images; nor need- " eth he ſacrifices, inaſmuch as he giveth life " and breath and nouriſhment to his crea- " tures. He hath made from one man all " nations. He hath given them ability to diſ- " cern him in his works, eſpecially in their " own bodily frame and reaſonable nature. " How then can you imagine the Author of all " things, and of yourſelves in particular, to " be like unto gold, or ſilver, or ſtone, graven

* 1 John i. 3. † Acts xiv. 3.

‡ See Acts xvii. 18—31.

" by your art? GOD hath been pleaſed to " overlook this ignorance in former times; but " now he calls upon you and all men to repent. " He hath appointed a perſon to offer you " conditions of pardon: he hath alſo ordained " him to judge you after theſe conditions: of " both theſe deſignations he hath given you " aſſurance, in that he hath raiſed him from " the dead." In this manner we may venture to paraphraſe his diſcourſe to the Athenians.

So earneſtly did this Apoſtle perſuade his cotemporaries, Jews and Gentiles, to embrace this great ſalvation; to receive the doctrines and precepts of the Goſpel, as the oracles of truth; to await its promiſes and threatenings, as the decrees of heaven. Could we ſuppoſe him, in like manner, to admoniſh theſe later ages; to addreſs a Church, whether planted originally by his charitable care, by his fellow-labourers, or by their early ſucceſſors; a Church, not harraſſed by the oppoſition of Jewiſh prejudice, or by the trying horrors of Heathen perſecution; freed alſo from the later evils of foreign tyranny, and a corrupted faith and worſhip; flouriſhing in an age of learning, and under a protecting and proſperous government; were he to addreſs a Chriſtian nation

in theſe advantageous circumſtances, how affectionately would he exhort them to improve in piety, in proportion to the bleſſings which they enjoy! He would remind them that the truth of the Goſpel has, ſince his days, been more and more confirmed and illuſtrated by the revolution of ages: that the evidence of Miracles, once recorded by eye-witneſſes in written hiſtory, remains unſhaken and undiminiſhed to the end of time: that the evidence of Prophecy increaſes continually by the accumulation of ſucceſſive accompliſhments, growing brighter and ſtronger from age to age: inaſmuch as later generations have heard, and ſeen, what the firſt diſciples of Jeſus beheld only with the eye of faith: "Jeruſalem troden "down by the Gentiles: the Jews diſperſed "among all nations:"* the Goſpel prevailing for ſeventeen centuries: "the Man of Sin,"† appearing at the time appointed, declining gradually, and haſtening to his deſtined fall. How forcibly would he preſs upon them theſe proofs irreſiſtible, that "the faith which was" of old "delivered to the ſaints,"‡ the religion which ſucceſſive ages have received from their

* Luke xxi. 24. † 2 Theſ. ii. 3, 6.
‡ Jude 3,

fathers, came down from heaven! How earneſtly would he entreat them to teach it diligently to the riſing generation, and to deliver it down to poſterity! Above all, how zealouſly would he urge them to obey its precepts! to inſure to themſelves the inheritance of its precious promiſes! How largely would he ſpeak to them of the goodneſs of GOD, in reſtoring his fallen creatures to the means of pardon and happineſs! of his mercy and longſuffering, in waiting for their repentance and reformation! of the holineſs of his nature, which abhors iniquity! of the juſtice of his government, which, if it be not repented and forſaken, will aſſuredly puniſh it! He would "perſuade them by the "terror of the Lord:"* he would "beſeech "them by the mercies of GOD:"† he would move them by the fear of miſery, by the hope of happineſs, by every method of holy importunity, to conſider, in this their time of trial, the things which concern their eternal welfare: directing their thoughts continually to that awful day, when GOD "ſhall render to every "man according to his works; to them, who, "by patient continuance in well-doing, ſeek

* 2 Cor. v. 11. † Rom. xii. 1.

" for a glorious immortality, eternal life" and happineſs unchangeable; " but to them who " are contentious, and do not obey the truth" revealed to them, and practiſe " unrighteouſneſs, " indignation and wrath; tribulation and an- " guiſh upon every ſoul of man, who," inſenſible to every argument of reaſon, and deaf to every call of grace, ſhall reſolutely perſiſt in " doing evil."*

* Rom. ii. 6—10. 2 Theſ. i. 8.

SERMON XXI.

ON THE EXCELLENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION.

JOHN VII. 46.

NEVER MAN SPAKE LIKE THIS MAN.

THIS remarkable teſtimony was borne to our bleſſed Lord by the officers ſent by the Chief Prieſts and Phariſees to apprehend him. It was the language of all his attentive hearers: "they were aſtoniſhed at his doctrine, "and wondered at the gracious words which "proceeded out of his mouth."* His diſcourſes, recorded by the Evangeliſts, have been read with admiration in every ſucceeding age: and his words have conſpired with his works, to ſhew to all generations, that he was "a Teacher come from GOD."†

The whole Chriſtian Revelation bears correſponding marks of its divine original. It is worthy of its author in its Diſcoveries, Pre-

* Matth. vii. 28, 29. Luke iv. 22. † John iii. 2.

cepts, and Promiſes. In its diſcoveries, it is conformable to our reaſonable notions of the divine attributes. In its precepts, it is agreeable to our natural ſentiments of moral virtue. In its promiſes, it correſponds with the inſtinctive deſires, and reaſonable wiſhes, of human nature. It leads by efficacious means to the higheſt end, the glory of the Creator in the perfection and happineſs of his creatures.

We are to conſider the Chriſtian Revelation, as begun in the prophetic intimation made to Adam; and completed by the preaching of Chriſt and his Apoſtles. The patriarchal hiſtory, the moſaic law, the prophets, the goſpel, contain ſo many parts of one great plan of Providence, graciouſly deſigned to inſtruct, and to redeem, mankind. The religious knowledge communicated in the Old Teſtament is confirmed, illuſtrated, and improved, in the New. Our bleſſed Lord hath ſpoken, not only in his own perſon, but by the ſacred writers who prepared the way before him, and by his diſciples who followed him. They all ſpake by "one and the ſelf-ſame ſpirit;"* which was granted to Prophets and Apoſtles at ſundry ſeaſons, and in divers proportions; on Chriſt

* 1 Cor. xii. 11.

it reſted "without meaſure,"* without limitation either of time or of degree. Accordingly we find an entire agreement in doctrine between the harbingers and their Lord, between the Maſter and his diſciples: yet the words of Chriſt bear a preeminence, proportioned to his ſuperior dignity: "he taught as one hav-"ing original authority, not as a ſcribe,"† or even as a prophet or apoſtle, but as the Son of GOD: "never man ſpake like this man."

Firſt. The excellency of the Chriſtian Revelation appears in its diſcoveries. Theſe diſcoveries are, a confirmation and illuſtration of ſome religious truths which might have been known, in part, without a revelation; and an original communication of others, which could not have been ſo known. The religious truths which might have been known, in part, without a revelation, are the attributes of GOD. "The inviſible things of him, his eternal "power and Godhead, are clearly ſeen, being "underſtood by the" viſible "things that are "made."‡ The repreſentation of the divine perfections given in the Holy Scriptures, is agreeable to the concluſions and conjectures

* John iii. 34. † Matth. vii. 29. ‡ Rom. i. 20.

of natural reaſon: ſelf-exiſtence, ſpirituality, eternity, unbounded power, univerſal preſence; providence extending to all things and every thing; infinite wiſdom, holineſs, juſtice, truth, goodneſs; mercy, conſiſtent with holineſs and juſtice. Theſe are eſſential characters of the Godhead; traced and ſketched in the book of nature, and in the mind of man. We ſee them clearly inſcribed on the page of Scripture. "I am that I am. He that liveth for "ever. GOD is a ſpirit. GOD ſaid, let there "be light: and there was light. His domi- "nion is an everlaſting dominion. Whither "ſhall I go from thy ſpirit? or whither ſhall "I flee from thy preſence? Behold the "heaven, and heaven of heavens, cannot con- "tain thee. Not a ſparrow falleth to the "ground without your father. He is perfect "in knowledge, mighty in wiſdom. A diſ- "cerner of the thoughts and intents of the "heart. He is of purer eyes than to behold "evil. There is none holy as the Lord. "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right: "With righteouſneſs ſhall he judge the world, "and the people with equity. The counſels "of GOD are faithfulneſs and truth. Thy

" word is truth. He is loving to every man;
" his mercy is over all his works."*

The religious truths which are diſcovered by the Chriſtian Revelation, and could not have been known without it, relate to the Redemption of mankind. The primitive ſtate of man, and the circumſtances of his fall, were, doubtleſs, communicated by the firſt parent to his immediate deſcendants: and ſome traces of this information appear in the fables of later ages. The true relation, however, was loſt in the heathen world. But this is a moſt important period in the hiſtory of man: and without the inſtruction concerning it, which the Scripture affords us, we could not account for the evils of his preſent ſtate. We now ſee that GOD made him perfect: he ſhewed him a path to walk in: he gave him reaſon as a guide. Had he followed her dictates, and obeyed the law of his nature, the heavenly bodies would not have been more correct and uniform in their courſe, than He. Nay rather, he might have equalled the regularity of ſupe-

* Exod. iii. 14. Dan. iv. 34. John iv. 24. Gen. i. 3. Dan. iv. 34. Pſal. cxxxix. 6. 1 Kings viii. 27. Matth. x. 29. Job xxxvii. 16, and xxxvi. 5. Heb. iv. 12. Habak. i. 13. 1 Sam. ii. 2. Gen. xviii. 25. Pſal. xcviii. 10. Iſ. xxv. 1. John xvii. 17. Pſal. cxlv. 9.

rior beings, free and rational like himſelf; and "the will of GOD might have been done on "earth, as it is in heaven." The ſame revelation which aſſigns the cauſe of the evil, diſcloſes alſo the ſtupendous remedy. That the eternal Son of GOD ſhould take upon him, the human nature, in order to reſtore it to its forfeited bleſſings, is a diſpenſation which, if it had not been revealed from heaven, could never have entered into the imagination of man. But now that it is made known to us, how conformable is it to our conceptions of the inexhauſted goodneſs of the Deity! How agreeable to our notions of his mercy; to which nothing can ſet bounds, but the holineſs of his nature, and the juſtice of his government! How correſponding to our ſentiments of his holineſs and juſtice; which required ſo high a method of atonement and reconciliation! The end of this gracious diſpenſation; the means; the early intimation given of it; the gradual unfolding; and the complete diſcovery; the conſiſtency of every part of the procedure with each other, and with the whole; theſe are ſubjects, which the more cloſely you contemplate, the more diſtinctly will you diſcern that they are worthy of GOD; the more firmly will you

believe that they are the work of GOD; and the more amply will you be convinced, that if they had not been deviſed and revealed by the Eternal Mind, they never could have occurred to the reaſon of any created being. The ſcheme of redemption, and the plan of creation, bear alike, in their wonderful fabric, the impreſs of their author: each, far exceeding the faculties of men and angels, and ſhewing the power and wiſdom of GOD.*

Secondly. From the diſcoveries of the Chriſtian Revelation we proceed to its Precepts. The ſum of moral duty is to conceive rightly of GOD, and upon theſe conceptions to form our reverence and obedience. A principal part of our reverence to GOD, is a reliance on his Perfections in all his diſpenſations towards us; a reliance on his power, wiſdom, juſtice, goodneſs; and, ſpecially, his truth in his declarations and promiſes. The ſacred writers of the New Teſtament denote this reliance by the word Faith; and largely inſiſt upon the neceſſity and excellence of it, as the teſt and evidence of our reverence, and the foundation of our obedience.†

* 1 Cor. i. 24.

† See particularly Heb. xi.

We have ſeen how the Holy Scriptures repreſent the perfections of GOD. The juſt conceptions which they give us of his nature, cannot fail to engage our faith and obedience. They, moreover, repreſent theſe duties as the unalterable law of our being; and as the indiſpenſable condition of our acceptance with GOD, in every period of his government. To believe his declarations and promiſes, and to obey his will, was the condition of life and happineſs in Paradiſe. Theſe virtues reſcued Noah and his family from the univerſal deluge. They diſtinguiſhed Abraham from his idolatrous neighbours; and honoured him with the high character of "the friend of GOD."* They were the title by which the Iſraelites held the land of promiſe; and enjoyed the bleſſings of their ſingular government, and the hopes of their religion. They are the terms on which we are made the diſciples of Jeſus; and receive the bleſſings and expectations of the Goſpel: with this difference only from former diſpenſations, that the objects of our Faith are enlarged by new and clearer declarations, and more extenſive and explicit promiſes; and the

* James ii. 21—23.

meaſure of our Obedience alſo is heightened by more ample revelations of the divine will.

A comprehenſive portion of our obedience to GOD, is juſtice and kindneſs to man, our fellow-creature. This duty is placed by the Holy Scriptures upon its true foundation, the the love of GOD. "This is the command-"ment; that he who loveth GOD love his "brother alſo."* The ſincerity of this love is aſcertained by a meaſure with which we are well acquainted: "thou ſhalt love thy neigh-"bour as thyſelf."† The acts and expreſſions of it are, with like propriety, referred to an equitable and familiar ſtandard: "whatſoever "ye would that men ſhould do unto you, do "ye even ſo to them."‡ It is required that theſe deeds of juſtice and kindneſs ſhould flow from their proper ſource, an upright and charitable heart: otherwiſe they would loſe their moral goodneſs, and be of ſhort, uncertain, duration. "Thou ſhalt not ſteal, or actually "injure thy neighbour: thou ſhalt not covet "his goods, or deſire to injure him. Thou "ſhalt not ſpeak evil of thy brother: thou

* 1 John iv. 21. † Levit. xix. 18. Matth. xix. 19.
‡ Matth. vii. 12.

" ſhalt not be angry with him, or think evil " of him, without a cauſe."* As our love of GOD is laid down as the foundation of our love to man; ſo the love of GOD to us, is propoſed as the moſt powerful inducement to cheriſh and exert our love to man. " If GOD ſo " loved us," if he hath created and preſerved us, to be the objects of his various and inexhauſted bounty; it is a debt of gratitude to the Univerſal Parent, to love thoſe whom he regards with equal favour, partakers of the ſame nature, and of the ſame bleſſings. " If " GOD ſo loved us, as to ſend his Son to re- " deem us, if the Son of GOD laid down his " life for us," here is an obligation " to love " one another,"† which reaſon never could have ſuggeſted. And this ſeems to be the meaning of our bleſſed Lord: " a new com- " mandment I give unto you, that ye love one " another; as I have loved you, that ye alſo " love one another:"‡ no new commandment in its matter and ſubſtance, but new in its reaſon, the wonderful love of Chriſt; new in its force and energy, derived from his divine

* Exod. xx. Matth. v. † 1 John iv. 10, 11. and iii. 16.
‡ John xiii. 34, 35.

example. The charity of the Chriſtian ought, therefore, to riſe ſuperior to the benevolence of the Heathen, in proportion to the greater bleſſings which he receives, and in conformity to the perfect model which lies before him. His faith exalts his Charity in warmth and activity: and alſo extends its influence to a larger ſphere. To advance, by virtuous meaſures, the proſperity of nations; and to improve the comforts, and ſooth the afflictions, of private life; is an employment worthy of a generous and enlightened mind. It is to imitate the watchful care, and to forward the kind deſigns, of Providence. It is to reſemble our gracious Maſter: who mourned over the impending calamities of his country; who, by his power and preſence, honoured the feaſt in Cana, and comforted the houſe of mourning at Bethany: who, even when he was paſſing from earthly ſorrows and connexions "to the joy that was "ſet before him,"* was not inattentive to the calls of friendſhip and filial duty. But as, in the ſame hour that he commended his mother to the temporal protection of "the diſciple "whom he loved,"† he rewarded the faith

* Heb. xii. 2. † John xix. 26, 27.

and repentance of the malefactor with the bleſſings of eternity;* ſo Charity, the diſtinguiſhing virtue of his religion, while ſhe neglects no part of ſocial duty, nor thinks any portion of human comfort unworthy of her care, extends her views beyond the narrow limits of this tranſient period. She wiſhes to inſtruct the ignorant; to reform the wicked; to improve the virtuous; to contribute to the promotion of general happineſs in the final allotments of an eternal ſtate.

A remaining portion of our obedience to God, is the preſervation and improvement of our Faculties, whether of mind or body; as being the gift of the Creator, the means of our enjoyment, and the inſtruments of our obedience. The Chriſtian Revelation directs the faculties of the mind to their proper end, the attainment of Truth and Good. It lays before us the moſt ſublime and important truths; the nature, the diſpenſations, and the will, of God. It propoſes to us the moſt ſubſtantial and laſting good; preſent ſatisfaction, in a life of progreſſive virtue and encreaſing hope; future happineſs, in a ſtate of confirmed holineſs and

* Luke xxiii. 43.

endleſs enjoyment. As to the faculties of the body, its powers, appetites, and paſſions, they are then in their due temperament and order, when they are controlled and directed by the ſuperior faculties of the mind. SOBRIETY, in its moſt ample and comprehenſive ſenſe, is the law by which they are to be governed. How forcibly this virtue is recommended by the Chriſtian Revelation, how plainly it is defined, how clearly the line is drawn between reaſonable and exceſſive gratifications, between permitted and forbidden indulgencies, I need not prove, before an audience familiarly acquainted with the diſcourſes of our Saviour, with the writings of his Apoſtles, and eſpecially with the Epiſtles of St. Paul. I need not remind them, how every vice which is oppoſite to Sobriety is ſtigmatized by the ſacred writers, as degrading the dignity of a reaſonable nature, and ſtaining the purity of the Chriſtian character; as injurious to the individual and to ſociety; as inconſiſtent with the beſt intereſts of the preſent life, and with the hope of the divine favour in a life to come.

Thirdly. As the Promiſes of the Chriſtian Revelation offer preſent bleſſings, which were ill

aſcertained, or little expected, by unaſſiſted nature; as they open to our view a ſcene of future happineſs, of which reaſon could form no hope or conception; they might have been placed among its Diſcoveries. But as theſe promiſes are one of the ſanctions of the Chriſtian law, and the completion of them depends upon our obedience, I thought it convenient to meditate on the Precept, before we look up to the Reward.

If we may ſuppoſe that the penalty denounced to the firſt parent on the condition of his diſobedience, implied a promiſe on the condition of his obedience, it was a Continuation of life and happineſs. This bleſſing appears to be ſuited to his perfect ſtate; adequate to the deſires of a creature made in the image, and enjoying the favour, of his Creator. In like manner the promiſes of the Goſpel are adapted to our ſituation, and proportioned to the wants and aſpirations of our imperfect nature. To a reaſonable creature, conſcious of guilt, and fearful of puniſhment, what can be more welcome, than a declaration of pardon on repentance and amendment? To ſuch a being, acquainted with the frailty of his nature; knowing by experience the difficulty and uncer-

tainty, firſt of his repentance, then of his amendment, and laſtly of his perſeverance; what can be more acceptable, than the promiſe of divine aſſiſtance, inclining him to think, and will, and act, conformably to his duty? Now, pardon was a bleſſing which nothing could aſſure to him, but a revelation from his offended Creator: and divine aſſiſtance was a tranſcendent favour, which reaſon was ſo far from expecting, that ſhe is ſometimes ſtartled at the report, and gives imperfect attention to the meſſenger: ſhewing, like a delirious patient, the extremity of her diſorder by the violence with which ſhe rejects the remedy. To that inſtinctive love of exiſtence, which is inſeparable from exiſtence, what can be ſo agreeable, as an aſſurance that it ſhall be gratified to eternity? To a thinking being, ever diſſatisfied with the preſent good, and running out in endleſs contemplation of the future, to a being full of hopes and fears, how ſoothing to "the multitude of his anxious "thoughts,"* is the proſpect of eternal happineſs! To a creature compounded of a material and a ſpiritual ſubſtance, who knows

* Pſal. xciv. 19.

that the one will in a few years be reduced to duſt, who believes that the other will exiſt for ever, how conſoling is the diſcovery, that this fatal extinction of the material part, this ſeparation ſo ſhocking to nature, will not be perpetual! that the whole being ſhall one day live again, no longer ſubject to infirmity and diſſolution! Laſtly, to a being, whoſe eſſence is to think and to deſire; whoſe proper exertions are contemplation and affection; whoſe object is truth and good; to ſuch a being, how delightful is the conſideration, that he ſhall one day "know even as he is known!"* that the works of creation and providence will be laid open to his view! that the world of ſpirits will become viſible to him! that knowledge will flow in upon his enlarged and ſtrengthened faculties, from objects and tranſactions of which he has now no idea, running on and increaſing to all eternity! How glorious is the hope, that he may one day be admitted, in ſuch manner and proportion as infinite wiſdom ſhall determine, to a nearer contemplation of all that is good and amiable in the univerſe, from the fountain to its moſt diſtant ſtreams, from "the Father of

* 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

"light"* to the moſt remote and feeble ray, from the Creator to the loweſt order of rational and virtuous creatures!

We ſee the Chriſtian Revelation, its diſcoveries, precepts, and promiſes, to be worthy of its divine original; conformable to the attributes of God, and ſuited to the nature and ſituation of man. We rejoice in a revelation ſo agreeable to our reaſon, ſo welcome to our affections, ſo abounding in preſent benefit, ſo tranſporting in future proſpect. We receive it with humility and gratitude, as the rule of our faith and manners; as the ſource of our ſatisfaction here; as the meaſure of our expectation in a world to come. We embrace this Religion as the infallible "guide of life, "the miſtreſs of wiſdom, the teacher of vir-"tue:"† and we think one day ſpent in the contemplation of her Diſcoveries, and the obſervance of her Precepts, better than a thouſand conſumed in the dark wanderings of ſcepticiſm, or in the ſordid purſuits of vice. We truſt that, through the merit of her Divine Author, we ſhall inherit her Promiſes: and

* James i. 17.

we rely upon the grace of his Holy Spirit, that no error or temptation ſhall ſo fatally corrupt our underſtandings, or ſeduce our affections, as to incline us to renounce everlaſting purity and happineſs, for "an immortality of guilt"† and miſery.

† The young ſcholar will recollect the beautiful addreſs of Cicero to his imperfect guide.—O vitæ philoſophia dux, indagatrix ſapientiæ, magiſtra virtutis! eſt autem unus dies ſecundùm tua præcepta actus peccanti immortalitati anteponendus!

SERMON XXII.

ON RELIGIOUS ANXIETY EXEMPLIFIED IN ST. PAUL.

PHILIP. III. 12, 13, 14.

NOT AS THOUGH I HAD ALREADY ATTAINED, EITHER WERE ALREADY PERFECT; BUT I FOLLOW AFTER, IF THAT I MAY APPREHEND THAT FOR WHICH ALSO I AM APPREHENDED OF CHRIST JESUS.

BRETHREN, I COUNT NOT MYSELF TO HAVE APPREHENDED; BUT THIS ONE THING I DO; FORGETTING THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEHIND, AND REACHING FORTH UNTO THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE BEFORE,

I PRESS TOWARD THE MARK, FOR THE PRIZE OF THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS.

WE may obſerve in the life and writings of St. Paul, two principal features of his natural character. The one, a ſtrong underſtanding, clear and vigorous in the purſuit and apprehenſion of truth. The other, warm affections, active and reſolute in following the dictates and concluſions of his underſtanding. As a well-inſtructed Jew, he was a zealous obſerver of the law of Moſes; and an earneſt expectant "of the promiſes made unto the Fa-

" thers."* But blinded by the prevailing prejudice of his country; not perceiving that the time was come, when the Prophet greater than Moſes was to appear; nor thinking it poſſible for any Prophet, "to change the cuſ-" toms which Moſes had delivered,"† he was for a ſeaſon, induced by his miſtaken piety, to reject the perſon and doctrine of the true Redeemer of Iſrael. When it pleaſed GOD to prove to him by a miracle, that Jeſus of Nazareth was the Saviour promiſed to his fathers, and expected by his nation and himſelf, he embraced, without heſitation, a truth ſo infallibly atteſted; and received, with dutiful ſubmiſſion, the divine command which was given him, to publiſh it to the world.‡ From that day, to ſtudy and to preach the Goſpel, ſeems to have been the ſole object of his life. His underſtanding being convinced that it came from GOD, he "conferred not," as he tells us, "with fleſh and blood;"§ he ſuſpended not his faith on philoſophic reaſonings, on worldly motives, or on human authorities: but ſurrendered himſelf to the Holy Spirit, to be fully inſtructed in its doctrines and precepts, and

* Acts xiii. 32, and xxvi. 6.
† Acts vi. 14.
‡ Acts ix. 15—17.
§ Gal. i. 16.

to be guided in the promotion of its gracious purpoſes. The ſame vigour of mind, and quick ſenſe of religious duty, which in his earlier days attached him to the rites of Moſes, accompanied him, for the remainder of his life, in his Chriſtian courſe. When he aroſe from "the feet of Gamaliel, after the ſtraiteſt ſect "of his religion, in all good conſcience, he had "lived a phariſee, touching the righteouſneſs "which is in the law, blameleſs."* When he became a diſciple and apoſtle of Jeſus, he gave implicit and unremitted attention to the leſſons of his Heavenly Teacher. With a diligence proportioned to theſe higher advantages, and to the ſpecial importance of his new ſituation, "he exerciſed himſelf to have "always a conſcience void of offence," and clear of ſelf-reproach, "toward GOD and to-"ward men."†

It is in this latter part of his life, and under his chriſtian character, that we are beſt acquainted with his religious behaviour, and moſt deeply intereſted in his example. We have a principal part of his hiſtory, written by St. Luke, his companion; and we have lively

* Acts xxii. 3. and xxvi. 5. Phil. iii. 6.

† Acts xxiv. 16. and xxiii. 1.

repreſentations of his faith and conduct, drawn in his Epiſtles by his own hand. There runs through his whole behaviour one prevailing ſentiment, which, in a peculiar manner, deſerves our obſervation. It flowed from a ſound underſtanding and good affections; enlightened and ſtrengthened by religious education, and habits of early piety; guided and aſſiſted, in maturer years, by the truths of the Goſpel, and by the Spirit of GOD. This ſentiment was a deep and conſtant Solicitude to diſcharge his chriſtian duty; and to obtain thereby the approbation of GOD, and the promiſed rewards of his piety in a life to come.

We have an example of this Religious Anxiety in the words before us. The Apoſtle had been led to ſpeak of his paſt ſituations, firſt as a Jew, and afterwards as a Chriſtian. With his uſual earneſtneſs, he declares the ſatisfaction which he feels, in being a diſciple of Jeſus, and in the hope which he entertains of acceptance, through faith in his mediation, and conformity to his will: happy, if, by active obedience and patient ſuffering, "he might at-"tain unto the reſurrection of the dead," and eternal happineſs. But from this high and tranſporting contemplation, he is brought down

by an humble ſenſe of his imperfection. Knowing, as a preacher of the Goſpel, the conditions upon which all its promiſes depend; conſcious of his infirmities, and the poſſibility of his failure; deſirous, perhaps, by his own diffidence, to ſuggeſt to his diſciples abundant reaſon for modeſty and caution; he adds, "not "as though I had already attained,* either "were already perfect: but I follow after, if "I may apprehend that, for which I am ap-"prehended of Chriſt Jeſus." That is: "I "hope indeed to attain to a bleſſed immorta-"lity: but I have not received any aſſurance "of it: I am not yet declared worthy of it. "I am now purſuing, and labouring to ap-"prehend or ſeize, this invaluable prize, to "which I am, as it were, led by the hand "of my gracious maſter." "Brethren," continues he, "I count not myſelf to have ap-"prehended: but this one thing I do: for-"getting thoſe things which are behind, and "reaching forth unto thoſe things which are "before, I preſs toward the mark for the "prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt "Jeſus." That is, "I do not yet poſſeſs the

* The Apoſtle alludes, through the whole paſſage, to the terms and cuſtoms of the Grecian Race, well known to the Philippians.

repreſentations of his faith and conduct, drawn in his Epiſtles by his own hand. There runs through his whole behaviour one prevailing ſentiment, which, in a peculiar manner, deſerves our obſervation. It flowed from a ſound underſtanding and good affections; enlightened and ſtrengthened by religious education, and habits of early piety; guided and aſſiſted, in maturer years, by the truths of the Goſpel, and by the Spirit of GOD. This ſentiment was a deep and conſtant Solicitude to diſcharge his chriſtian duty; and to obtain thereby the approbation of GOD, and the promiſed rewards of his piety in a life to come.

We have an example of this Religious Anxiety in the words before us. The Apoſtle had been led to ſpeak of his paſt ſituations, firſt as a Jew, and afterwards as a Chriſtian. With his uſual earneſtneſs, he declares the ſatisfaction which he feels, in being a diſciple of Jeſus, and in the hope which he entertains of acceptance, through faith in his mediation, and conformity to his will: happy, if, by active obedience and patient ſuffering, "he might at-"tain unto the reſurrection of the dead," and eternal happineſs. But from this high and tranſporting contemplation, he is brought down

by an humble ſenſe of his imperfection. Knowing, as a preacher of the Goſpel, the conditions upon which all its promiſes depend; conſcious of his infirmities, and the poſſibility of his failure; deſirous, perhaps, by his own diffidence, to ſuggeſt to his diſciples abundant reaſon for modeſty and caution; he adds, "not "as though I had already attained,* either "were already perfect: but I follow after, if "I may apprehend that, for which I am ap-"prehended of Chriſt Jeſus." That is: "I "hope indeed to attain to a bleſſed immorta-"lity: but I have not received any aſſurance "of it: I am not yet declared worthy of it. "I am now purſuing, and labouring to ap-"prehend or ſeize, this invaluable prize, to "which I am, as it were, led by the hand "of my gracious maſter." "Brethren," continues he, "I count not myſelf to have ap-"prehended: but this one thing I do: for-"getting thoſe things which are behind, and "reaching forth unto thoſe things which are "before, I preſs toward the mark for the "prize of the high calling of GOD in Chriſt "Jeſus." That is, "I do not yet poſſeſs the

* The Apoſtle alludes, through the whole paſſage, to the terms and cuſtoms of the Grecian Race, well known to the Philippians.

" prize; but I purſue it with the perſeverance
" and caution of the patient Racer. Like him, I
" do not, in the midſt of my courſe, look back
" upon the path behind me, ſatisfied with my
" paſt activity; my whole attention is given
" to the path before me. I fix my eye upon
" the prize, which GOD holds forth to me from
" on high. I run in the way which he, the
" Sovereign Diſpoſer, has marked out to me.
" Under the conditions which he hath been
" pleaſed to preſcribe to me, I humbly hope
" and truſt that I ſhall attain to it."

His arguments and motives for this unceaſing anxiety, and perſevering diligence, in the performance of his Chriſtian duty, were weighty and perſuaſive: not peculiar to the circumſtances of his converſion, to the age in which he lived, or to the high office which he bore. They affect his diſciples and followers in all ſucceeding times. They are the plain dictates of reaſon, founded on our ſituation in this tranſient ſtate, which is preparatory to an eternal duration, wherein our portion will depend upon our preſent choice. They occur continually to every ſerious perſon: and the conſiderate hearer will recollect them, as the reſult of his own reflections. Whether in the

mind of an Apoſtle, or a private chriſtian, they are the thoughts "of truth and ſoberneſs."*

Firſt then, unqueſtionably, the Apoſtle looked up with habitual reverence to the Author of his nature, the Judge of his actions, and the Supreme Diſpoſer of his being. The holineſs of GOD, his power, his juſtice, his goodneſs, were, no doubt, perpetually in his view. He conſidered that the perfections of God demand the admiration and reverence of every reaſonable being in the univerſe: that his experienced goodneſs to mankind calls for their dutiful affection and humble gratitude: that obedience to his all-perfect and ſovereign will, is an obligation impoſed upon them by the condition of their being, as the creatures of his power, and as the objects of his bounty: that as they ſhall act conformably, or not conformably, to this high obligation, they ſhall be approved or diſapproved by his holy and unerring judgment: that in the order of his providence, he will aſſuredly, in ſome future world, make a due diſtinction between the obedient and the diſobedient; a diſtinction great, and manifeſt, and laſting; ſuch as will deeply affect their happineſs, will make known the equity

* Acts xxvi. 25.

of his government over them, and will exiſt as long as the immortal nature which he hath given them. Theſe truths could not eſcape the notice of a well-inſtructed Iſraelite, who "from a child had known the Holy Scrip-"tures."* Theſe doctrines were the early leſſons of his domeſtic education. He had heard them inculcated in the Schools of the Learned. He had ſeen them repreſented in the daily ritual of the Temple. They were "preached in the Synagogue every Sabbath "day."† His religious knowledge ended not here: it was confirmed and enlarged by revelation from heaven.‡ He was informed, that "God hath appointed a day, in which he "will judge the world in righteouſneſs." He knew who will preſide at the awful judgment. He underſtood the laws and meaſures, by which the judgment will proceed. He knew the neceſſary qualifications for acquittal, honour, and reward. The ſentence was in his ears: the execution of it was before his eyes: "come, ye bleſſed of my Father: depart from "me, ye workers of iniquity." So well inſtructed then as he was in the tranſactions of

* 2 Tim. iii. 15. † Acts xv. 21.
‡ Gal. i. 12. 1 Cor. xi. 23.

that important day, it is no wonder, if, while ſo great an intereſt was depending, he felt a deep ſolicitude, and lived under a mixture of hope and apprehenſion: ſometimes cheering himſelf under the evils of life, and the conflicts of his Chriſtian warfare, with a firm expectation, that "there was laid up for him a crown "of righteouſneſs, which GOD, the righteous "judge, ſhall give him at that day:"* at others, viewing the awful poſſibility of his loſing this heavenly prize: rouſing, therefore, himſelf and his hearers to an anxious and active diligence: renewing in himſelf and them the prudent reſolution "to walk circumſpect-"ly,† and to work out their ſalvation with fear "and trembling."‡

Secondly, it is probable that the contemplative mind of the Apoſtle, learned in the ancient Scriptures, and enlightened by revelation, would be led to conſider, what muſt be the condition of an immortal Spirit, enlarged from this earthy priſon, entered into a new ſtate of being, conſcious of having diſobeyed the will of his Creator; of having oppoſed the deſigns of his providence, and the welfare of his crea-

* 2 Tim. iv. 8. † Eph. v. 15.

‡ Philip. ii. 12.

tures; under the ſenſe of his diſpleaſure; under the remorſe and reproach of his own reaſonable nature. What muſt be the anguiſh of a Spirit ſo circumſtanced, every conſiderate perſon may conjecture in a ſmall proportion, who recollects the ſtate of his own mind, when he has but doubted in any inſtance, whether he has deviated from the path of duty, and incurred the diſpleaſure of GOD. St. Paul himſelf had felt the ſhock of ſuch a recollection, when it pleaſed the Father of mercies to recall him from his wanderings by a voice from heaven: on that memorable day, "when, "trembling and aſtoniſhed,"* he perceived, that "however ignorantly, he did it, in un-"belief, he had been a blaſphemer, a perſecu-"tor, and injurious."† The whiſpers of conſcience, and the ſilent ſuggeſtions of the Holy Spirit, without the miraculous interference of a "heavenly viſion,"‡ have, by the temporary pains of an early repentance, reſcued many a chriſtian, in the days of his trial, from "the "worm which never dieth:"§ but when the "accepted time is paſt, when the day of ſal-

* Acts ix. 6.
† 1 Tim. i. 13.
‡ Acts xxvi. 19.
§ Mark ix. 44.

"vation"* is cloſed for ever, there is no hour of reformation, no promiſe of grace, or pardon: there remaineth only an unavailing remorſe. This anguiſh of repentance muſt, in the nature of things, be the certain and unceaſing puniſhment of unexpiated ſin. It is not a poſitive infliction from the hands of a Moral Governour; it flows from the conſtitution which he hath given us; it grows out of the nature and eſſence of a reaſonable ſoul; and muſt, therefore, follow her through every ſtage and manner of her being. In this world, indeed, it is often abated or interrupted: the ſoul is forcibly hindered from looking into herſelf; her attention is engroſſed by daily occupations; her power is exhauſted in the purſuit of preſent pleaſure: her views of future good or evil are obſtructed, or deluded, by the ſpecious repreſentations of ſenſe and paſſion. But when this ſcene, and all its periſhable intereſts, ſhall no longer engage her attention, or influence her judgment; when ſhe ſhall impartially compare her conduct with the eternal laws of truth and righteouſneſs; when ſhe ſhall behold, with enlarged and enlightened faculties, the beauty

* 2 Cor. vi. 22.

and reaſonableneſs of virtue; when ſhe ſhall feel, with the whole native warmth of her affections, the Goodneſs of GOD which ſhe hath abuſed; and ſhall ſurvey, with bitter aſtoniſhment, the treaſures of his Bounty which ſhe hath forfeited; is it conceiveable, that, under theſe impreſſions, equally dreadful and incurable, ſhe can ever taſte of happineſs?

To this natural conſequence of a life ſpent and finiſhed in unrepented and unforſaken ſin, it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that the righteous Governour of the univerſe will add ſome poſitive, and judicial, puniſhment. But the Inſpired Apoſtle, though he ſometimes argued on religious ſubjects on the general principles of common ſenſe; and reaſoned, with his Corinthian converts on "a reſurrection,"* and with Felix "on a judgment to come;"† yet he built his apprehenſion and notion of a future ſtate on a firmer ground: he formed them upon the authoritative declarations of his Divine Maſter, and the ſpecial revelation of the Holy Spirit. "Knowing," by theſe authentic teſtimonies, "the terror of the Lord, he perſuad-
" ed men;" he urged them "to live ſober-

* 1 Cor. xv. 35—41. † Acts xxiv. 25.

"ly, righteouſly, and godly, in this preſent "world;"* he warned them to prepare themſelves, by a ſincere obedience, to "appear be-"fore the judgment ſeat of Chriſt."† And for himſelf, ſuch was his opinion of human infirmity, ſo great was his dread of danger, where the impending evil was ſo inſupportable; that, though he was in the mid courſe of an active and heroic piety, laying deep and wide the foundations of the Chriſtian Church, and promoting the happineſs of millions yet unborn; he diſciplined himſelf ſtrictly in the ſchool of Moral Virtue, and in the duties of the Chriſtian Race: "he kept under his bo-"dy," his affections and paſſions, and "brought "them into ſubjection;" ſtartling at the poſſibility, that, "after having preached to others, "he himſelf ſhould be a caſt-away;"‡ that, having proclaimed to others the honours and rewards of victory, he himſelf ſhould incur the diſgrace and miſery of a defeat.

Thirdly, it is evident from the hiſtory and writings of this great Apoſtle, that he fre-

* Tit. ii. 12.

† 2 Cor. v. 11, 12.

‡ 1 Cor. ix. 27.

quently withdrew his thoughts from theſe awful meditations, on the natural evil of ſin, and the poſitive inflictions of divine juſtice; and entered largely into the delightful conſideration of the genuine conſequences of virtue, of the goodneſs and mercy of GOD, of the rewards which he hath promiſed through Chriſt Jeſus to them who love and obey him. He ſeems to have been fixing his eyes continually on that ſtate of perfect happineſs, which the Goſpel opened to his view. So clear and bright was his proſpect of this heavenly ſcene, that when he attempts to deſcribe it, his expreſſions ſink under the greatneſs of his conceptions; nor is he able to unfold, in the ordinary courſe of language, his idea of that "exceed-"ing beyond meaſure, and eternal weight, of "glory," which was to compenſate abundantly for all his ſufferings, under the infirmities and decays of nature, the diſtreſs of poverty and perſecution, and the apprehenſion of a violent death. "He bore about in his body "the dying of the Lord Jeſus;" he cheerfully ſuffered in his own perſon what Chriſt ſuffered; becauſe "he knew, that he which "raiſed up the Lord Jeſus, ſhall raiſe up" him

alſo to a happy immortality: for he conſidered, that "if the earthly houſe of his taber-
"nacle," his body, "were diſſolved, he had
"a building of GOD" awaiting him, "a
"houſe not made with hands," not like any fabric made or known on earth, "a body or
"habitation incorruptible, eternal, in the hea-
"vens."*

WE have every reaſon piouſly to believe, that his religious care to perform the whole will of GOD, as it preſerved him in an uninterrupted courſe of active and ſuffering virtue, ſo hath obtained for him a reward of his perſeverance, in a ſtate of peace and ſecurity; "where he reſteth from his labours; whither
"his works have followed him:"† free from the evils of life, and the ſolicitude of a ſtate of trial; in ſure and certain hope of his final, complete, and everlaſting recompenſe.

We bleſs GOD for the bright examples which he hath given us in his Saints and Martyrs, and other eminent chriſtians in all ages. They caſt a ſhining light on the path of duty;‡ they quicken our diligence; and ſtrengthen us

* 2 Cor. iv. 17, 10, 14. and v. 1. † Rev. xiv. 13.
‡ Prov. iv. 18.

in our perſeverance. Theſe honoured perſons "have fought the good fight; they have fi-"niſhed their courſe;* they have entered into "the joy of their Lord."† This is our day of trial: a ſhort, uncertain, day; which cannot exceed the moments of its natural duration; and may be eclipſed or cloſed ſuddenly, at the third, the ſixth, or the ninth, hour. It will be our wiſdom to proportion our anxiety and induſtry to the high importance of the work, and to the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of the time. We have every encouragement "to "preſs towards the mark;" the eaſineſs of the race, as well as the greatneſs of the prize. For, to abſtain from pernicious pleaſures; to be juſt and kind to all men; to diſcharge the duties of our particular ſituations; to reverence the Almighty; to believe his declarations; to obey his laws; to implore his pardon for our offences; to praiſe him for his paſt goodneſs; to pray to him for the continuance of his favour;—a Religion which traces out ſuch a line of conduct, muſt, by its propriety and lovelineſs, recommend itſelf to our under-

* 2 Tim. iv. 7.

† Matth. xxv. 21. 2 Cor. v. 8. Phil. i. 23.

ſtanding and affections. But when we alſo view the rewards which ſhe ſets before us, the approbation of GOD, the protection of his providence, the applauſe of conſcience, and the proſpect of everlaſting happineſs; when we view our Religion thus holding forth to us every ſatisfaction of which our nature is capable; carrying in her hand the conſolations of Time, and the bleſſings of Eternity; we ſhall ſurely apply to her with ſome variation, the forcible language of our great Apoſtle.* "Who ſhall" ſeduce or "ſeparate "us from the love" and obſervance of thy laws? "Shall tribulation, or diſtreſs, or per-"ſecution, or famine, or the ſword?" Shall any of the terrifying diſaſters, or the alluring intereſts, of this mortal ſtate? No. We are "perſuaded" that neither the fear of "death," nor the love of "life; nor angels nor princi-"palities nor powers," no arts of Satan and his inſtruments; "nor things preſent nor "things to come," no pains or pleaſures felt or expected; "nor height" of proſperity, "nor depth" of miſery; "nor any other "creature," no event or circumſtance in the

* Rom. viii. 35, 38, 39.

whole circle of the creation; nothing, we humbly hope under the divine Grace, ſhall draw us from the path of religious duty; ſhall divert us from the love and fear of GOD; ſhall deprive us of his preſent favour; ſhall diſappoint us of "the prize of his high calling in "Chriſt Jeſus."

SERMON XXIII.

ON PARTAKING OTHER MEN'S SINS.

I TIM. V. 22.

NEITHER BE PARTAKER OF OTHER MEN'S SINS.

THE words have been ſuppoſed to be capable of two interpretations. The one is this: "be not partaker of other men's ſins, "by committing the ſame ſins thyſelf. Fol- "low not a multitude to do evil.* Let not "faſhion or example ſeduce thy judgment, or "corrupt thy practice." The other interpretation is this: "be not partaker of other men's "ſins, by contributing in any way to their "commiſſion of them; whether by leading "them into ſin, or by not doing thy utmoſt to "withdraw them from it."

The inſpired Epiſtles, like all other writings, and epiſtles more eſpecially, are beſt underſtood, by conſidering the events and circumſtances which gave occaſion to them; and

* Exod. xxiii. 2.

alſo the character and ſituation of the perſons addreſſing and addreſſed. St. Paul, an Apoſtle, writes to Timothy, as to the head of the Church of Epheſus; giving him directions for the diſcharge of his important office. On this occaſion, it would not, indeed, be improper or unnatural to remind him, "that his ſtation "required a peculiar purity of life and man-"ners; that any defect in morality would be "aggravated in him, by the ſuperior advan-"tages which he enjoyed, and by the ſpecial "engagements into which he had entered; "that any conduct which was ſinful in other "men, would, in him, be exceedingly ſinful." This conſideration may ſupport the firſt interpretation. But on the other hand, the general obligation of perſonal ſanctity, we may ſuppoſe to have been a leſſon long ſince inculcated by a zealous Apoſtle, well acquainted with the principles of the Goſpel; and to have been ſufficiently underſtood and practiſed, by a favourite diſciple, whom he had called to ſo high an office in the Church of Chriſt. The repetition therefore of ſo plain a precept, though never ſtrictly unſeaſonable, may not appear ſo well ſuited to the preſent occaſion. Beſides, in the words immediately

preceding, he inſtructs him, not with regard to his private behaviour, but to the diſcharge of his public office, and to his conduct, as it reſpected others. It ſeems therefore that the ſecond interpretation is the true one: and that the Apoſtle admoniſhes Timothy to beware, leſt haply, by the neglect of any duty, ſocial or miniſterial, he involve himſelf in the guilt of ſins, actually committed by other men, but yet occaſioned by his fault, or not prevented by his charitable care. Indeed, under this interpretation, he plainly alludes to a ſpecial caſe, wherein he may incur this criminality through haſte or negligence. But the warning which he gives is general, and the danger which this warning implies is univerſal: and we may well take it as an admonition, worthy of an Apoſtle, anxious for the propagation and perfection of Chriſtian Morals, addreſſed not only to the Biſhop and Church of Epheſus, but to every member of the Catholic Church of GOD: "Be not partaker in the guilt of "other men's ſins:" either miſleading and tempting them into the ways of vice, or not, in proportion to your ſituation and influence, guiding and encouraging them in the path of virtue.

The admonition is founded on this primary dictate of Religion; that it is the duty of man, as of every reaſonable creature, to fulfil the will of GOD, and to promote the deſigns of his providence. "Thy will be done," by us and all men, "on earth as it is in heaven." "Thy will be done, becauſe it is thy will; "becauſe it is right, and is the meaſure of "our perfection; becauſe it is beneficial, and "is the means of our happineſs." The deſigns of his providence are, as we are ſufficiently inſtructed to affirm, that all men, by obedience to his will, ſhould attain to perfection and happineſs. Therefore, not to forward this gracious purpoſe, ſtill more to retard or obſtruct it, is a breach of the original obligation impoſed upon us by the condition of our exiſtence, as the reaſonable creatures of GOD. This admonition is, further, ſupported by a ſecondary dictate of Religion; that it is the duty of man, as of every reaſonable creature, to promote the happineſs of his fellow-creatures; of all, according to their order, deſtination, and capacity; of thoſe more particularly who are partakers of his own ſpecial nature. GOD has impreſſed upon our hearts a ſenſe of this duty; he has given us an in-

ſtinctive impulſe to perform it: he calls us to it by the ſuggeſtions of natural reaſon; he binds it upon us by the word of Revelation. Now it is a truth unqueſtionable, that the more virtue there is in any age or country, the larger is the ſum of their preſent happineſs: and we have every aſſurance, that the religious conduct of each individual will be the means of his happineſs in a life to come. An obligation therefore to promote the happineſs of man, is an obligation to promote his virtue.

The admonition ſprings from theſe two religious principles, the love of God and the love of Man: it reſts upon theſe two pillars of Morality; upon "the firſt and great "commandment;" and upon "the ſecond" which aroſe from it, and is "like unto it."* Whoever is "a partaker in" the guilt of "the "ſins of others," cannot ſay with a well-grounded confidence, "theſe commandments "have I kept from my youth."† In what degree or meaſure he may be a partaker in this guilt; how far he may have neglected, when enabled or called upon, to improve the virtue of others; how far he may, careleſsly or induſtriouſly, have diminiſhed or deſtroyed it;

* Matth. xxii. 38, 39. † Matth. xix. 20.

how far the ſin of his blamable negligence, or of his wicked activity, may be ſoftened or aggravated by the infinite variety of ſituation, opportunity, or capacity; all this muſt be determined by his own conſcience, and by the equitable judgment of GOD. But we may be allowed to mark out ſome particular relations in civil and domeſtic life, which, in proportion as they ſtrengthen and bind cloſer the general obligation, as they enlarge the influence, and increaſe the reſponſibility, do of courſe enhance the participation, and aggravate the guilt: obſerving previouſly, that, though the turn of this Apoſtolical precept may lead him who is to comment upon it, to preſent the unfavourable ſide of any character, and rather to mention the blame and ſelf-reproach of doing wrong, than the honour and ſatisfaction of doing right; yet every cenſure of inattention to duty, is an implied commendation of a conſcientious diſcharge of it: the ſame repreſentation and argument, is at once a charitable call from error, and an encouragement to perſeverance in wiſdom.

The firſt relation of human life is that of Parent and Child. The obligation of the Parent ariſing from this relation, is acknowledged

univerſally. The powerful and extenſive influence of early inſtruction and example is well known. If, therefore, in any family, no care be taken what ſhall be the firſt indeleble characters imprinted on the infant mind; if the child, as he advances toward youth and manhood, hear domeſtic converſations, or behold examples, which miſlead his apprehenſions of true and falſe, of right and wrong; which teach him to deem lightly and irreverently of things ſerious and ſacred, ſuch as demand our graveſt attention and deepeſt veneration, as, the name of GOD, his attributes, his revelations, the laws which he has given us, and the never-ending proſpects which he has opened to us; if an early introduction into promiſcuous company, or the peruſal of ill-choſen authors, add their united influence, to abate his natural ſenſe of Religion, to confound his notions of moral duty, and to withdraw his thoughts from a future ſtate; if every leſſon of prudence which he hears inculcated, refer ſolely to the intereſts, the honours, and the amuſements, of the preſent world; if, under all theſe fatal diſadvantages, he at length become an Unbeliever and a Libertine, deaf to the call of Truth, and blind to the charms of Virtue; pur-

ſuing as his only object, with an ill-directed and unſteady aim, the pleaſure of the preſent hour; renouncing every hope of happineſs in a life to come; if theſe ſhould be the dreadful conſequences of a careleſs education; the queſtion naturally ariſes, who was it that, in all moral calculation and fair probability, were the principal authors of all this folly and miſery? Was it not they, who were called upon by every feeling of nature, and bound by every obligation of duty, to form his ſentiments and manners? to repreſent to him the wiſdom of a virtuous conduct? to inculcate the neceſſity of it as the condition of his happineſs in every period of his being? to guide him, and go before him, in the path of duty? to inſtil into him the religious knowledge which they have themſelves enjoyed, in a chriſtian country, and in a cultivated age? to teach him to acquire that beſt poſſeſſion, to leave him that moſt valuable inheritance, the bleſſing and protection of the Almighty, and the hope of his everlaſting favour?

A ſecond relation of human life is that of Maſter and Servant. The particular obligation ariſing out of this relation, reſults from this plain conſideration: that the Maſter, by means

of his domeſtic intercourſe, his ſuperior ſtation, and, uſually, his greater knowledge, has a ſpecial opportunity and ability to improve the religious character of the Servant; and the extent and force of all obligation, increaſes with an enlargement of ability and opportunity. It is vain to allege that the duty of the Maſter ends with the performance of his civil contract, maintenance, good treatment, and protection. "As we have opportunity, let us "do good unto all men,"* is a dictate of natural equity, as well as an authoritative precept of the chriſtian law. The praiſe of the faithful Patriarch was a declaration of his duty: "I know him that he will command his chil-"dren and his houſehold after him, and they "ſhall keep the way of the Lord."† If, therefore, the Maſter take no meaſures whatſoever to improve his Servant in chriſtian knowledge, and to incite him to the practice of moral duty; if he give him no exhortation, or even convenient time and opportunity, to attend the public offices of religion; if he never teach him to make the Sabbath a day of devotion and recollection, as well as a day of reſt

* Gal. vi. 10. † Gen. xviii. 19.

and cheerfulneſs; if, on the contrary, he lead him, by his own example, or by the habits of his family, to forget all diſtinctions between times and ſeaſons; if he feel no benevolent anxiety, that the perſon who lives under his eye, attends him in health and ſickneſs, aſſiſts him in his buſineſs and in his amuſements, ſhould be virtuous and happy, proſperous in the preſent world, and bleſſed in a world to come; if he forget that it may depend upon his example and admonitions, upon the turn which the mind and habits of his Servant may take in his family, whether he ſhall be a good chriſtian and a uſeful citizen,—or whether he ſhall become an abandoned profligate, baniſhed, perhaps, from civilized ſociety, or taken out of the world, by public juſtice;—if theſe ſentiments and reflections never enter into his mind, or call not forth his active benevolence; it is impoſſible to affirm, that he is not "a partaker" in the moral conſequences; that he is not in ſome proportion accountable to GOD, for the loſs of that goodneſs and happineſs which he hath not endeavoured to promote; and for that actual wickedneſs and

miſery, which it is poſſible, or even probable, that he had it in his power, more or leſs, to prevent.

A third ſpecial obligation, ariſing from the relative ſituations of life, is that which lies upon the Miniſters of Religion. The end of their office is the preſervation and advancement of piety and virtue. Their education prepares them for this charitable undertaking. Their ſolemn engagements bind them to the ſteady proſecution of it. The civil government ſupports and protects them in their labours. The wiſe and good aſſiſt and encourage them. If they neglect the duties of their high and important calling; if they be inattentive to the general intereſts of religion, to the propagation and right apprehenſion of its doctrines and precepts, and to the influence of them upon the lives of men; if they be not ſolicitous for the particular inſtruction and edification of the congregations committed to their care; ſtill more, if by a life and converſation not exemplary, or even cenſurable, they tend to diminiſh in the minds of men a reverence of things ſerious and ſacred, "of righ-
" teouſneſs, temperance, and judgment to

"come;"*—no candour or charity can acquit them, of a direct participation in the increaſe of moral evil ariſing from their negligent miniſtration. The declaration of GOD to his prophet may, in due proportion to the nature and extent of their reſpective commiſſions, be applied to the ordinary miniſters of his written word. "Son of man, I have made thee a "watchman unto the houſe of Iſrael: there-"fore, hear the word at my mouth, and give "them warning from me. When I ſay unto "the wicked, thou ſhalt ſurely die; and thou "giveſt him not warning, nor ſpeakeſt to "warn" him "from his wicked way to ſave "his life; the ſame wicked man ſhall die in "his iniquity; but his blood will I require at "thy hand. Yet, if thou warn the wicked, "and he turn not from his wickedneſs, nor "from his wicked way, he ſhall die in his ini-"quity; but thou haſt delivered thy ſoul."†

A fourth relative ſituation of life, impoſing a ſpecial obligation, is that of Magiſtrate, whether ſupreme or ſubordinate; whether as engaged in the enacting of laws, or in carrying them into execution. It has been ſaid, indeed,

* Acts xxiv. 25. † Ezek. iii. 17—19.

that the duty of the Magiſtrate reſpects only the outward ſecurity, and temporal welfare, of the people. But, beſides that the worldly proſperity of any ſociety never was, or can be, obtained without the aid of religious principles and ſanctions; the Magiſtrate ſtands, like other men, under the general obligation to fulfil the deſigns of Providence, and to diſcharge his duty to his fellow-creatures, by the promotion of virtue in order to happineſs: and, as his ſtation affords him ſingular opportunity and ability, the law of his common nature unites with his ſpecial deſignation, in calling him to the patronage of Religion, to the foſtering care of every thing that is right, to the cenſure and diſcouragement "of evil doers, and to the "praiſe of them that do well."* The pious Governour or Lawgiver, far from partaking in the ſins of his ſubjects or his fellow-citizens, will ſhare in the honour, and in the reward, of their virtues: and while he makes the beſt proviſion for the primary object of his inſtitution, their ſafety and accommodation in a tranſient ſtate, the moral influence of his perſonal example and civil regulations may affect their ſubſtantial happineſs in a ſtate unſeen and per-

* 1 Pet. ii. 14.

manent; and he may become to them "the "Miniſter of GOD for" their final and everlaſting "good."* Nor is this duty, and this honour, to be confined to one, or to many, in the higher orders of the community. Every portion of civil authority carries with it an increaſed ability to afford protection and encouragement to virtue. The ſubordinate Magiſtrate is, in his rank and proportion, enabled to ſtrengthen the private ſentiment and inclination to goodneſs by the public voice; and to guard a ſincere unaffected piety againſt the inſult of the Blaſphemer and the Libertine, by his own conſpicuous example, by the ſanction of eſtabliſhed cuſtom, and by the majeſty of law. If he neglect this opportunity which his ſtation gives him, and, ſtill more, if he pervert it; if he diſparage in the eyes of the people the public offices of religion, by frequent abſence, or irreverent attendance; if he forget the ſobriety of manners, and the decency of character, which is peculiarly requiſite in a guardian of public order; if he fall, himſelf, into irregularities, which it is his ſpecial duty, ſometimes to puniſh, and always to diſcourage; thus diminiſhing within the circle of his juriſ-

* Rom. xiii. 4.

diction a ſenſe of Religion and Morality, and a reverence of good Government;—he ſpreads a contagion, of which he knows not the extent or conſequences; and occaſions, or increaſes, a depravity of manners, which may not be confined within the ſphere of his own immediate influence, or within the period of his own age.

Laſtly; ſimilar to theſe ſpecial obligations, ariſing from the relations above mentioned, are ſuch as flow from ſuperior fortune, learning, natural ability, age, or experience; every diſtinction which gives one perſon an influence over the mind of another. Each of theſe advantages, apparently accidental, is a talent placed in the hand of the poſſeſſor, to be devoted to the honour of the Supreme Giver, in carrying on the plan of his righteous and benevolent government. Each of them is a ſilent call of the divine providence to miniſter to the general good. To reject the ſummons, or to act even in oppoſition to it;—for a man to make his wealth an inſtrument of corruption, and an allurement to ſin; to employ his genius and learning in a vain endeavour, to unſettle the eternal principles of natural religion, to perplex the clear evidences of revelation, to confound the meaſures of moral duty, to darken

the proſpects of a future ſtate; to render his age or experience, which, in the order of things, ſhould be the guide and inſtructor of youth, a ſanction and an apology for its extravagancies, and even a leader in its follies;—any abuſe like this, of the endowments of nature, or the bleſſings of ſociety, which are all originally the gift of heaven, requires not the authority of an Apoſtle, to place it in the catalogue of heinous and preſumptuous ſins, or to excite and juſtify our deteſtation and horror.

To draw us to moral perfection and everlaſting happineſs is the deſign of the Creator. To remove the impediments which obſtructed this gracious purpoſe; to atone for ſin, to conquer death, to inſtruct us in the meaſures of an acceptable obedience; was the object of the Redeemer. To enable us to fulfil theſe meaſures, is the intent of the Sanctifier. The Angels of Heaven "rejoice over every righteous "perſon, and over every ſinner that repent-"eth:"* they are ſaid, in a way to us unknown, "to miniſter for our ſalvation."† Prophets, Evangeliſts, and Apoſtles, inſtruct and admoniſh us, by the records which they have left us, by the holineſs of their lives, and by the conſtancy

* Luke xv. 7. † Heb. i. 14.

of their deaths. The wife and good in every age, inform and perſuade us by their writings and converſations; they exhort and encourage us by their virtues. One only claſs of beings in the univerſe of GOD, have conſpired againſt us from the beginning; labouring by deceitful temptation to effect our ruin, even on the fearful condition, of "being partakers in our "ſins," and in our condemnation. Every thinking perſon will turn with horror from the frightful poſſibility, of his aiding ſo dreadful a confederacy againſt GOD, againſt every order of good beings, againſt his fellow-creatures, againſt his own ſoul. He will view attentively and effectually his high obligations to take an active part on the other ſide. His reverence of GOD will move him to conform to his gracious will, and to further the benevolent deſigns of his providence. His love of man will excite his wiſhes and endeavours to promote his everlaſting welfare. Piety and Charity will thus unite their influence; and will forcibly impel him to uſe every means and opportunity of advancing the general good. The love of Truth and Virtue, which is a part of our degenerate nature, and is conſtantly nouriſhed by aſſiſting grace, will make him

anxious for the propagation of them. The love of Happineſs, inſeparable from every thinking being, will recommend a conduct, which, while it derives a larger portion of it to others, opens new ſources of it to himſelf. While he enjoys a diſintereſted ſatisfaction in contributing his ſincere endeavours towards the goodneſs and welfare of mankind, he may be allowed to look forward to that gracious recompenſe, which is reſerved for thoſe who "turn" any "to righteouſneſs,"* and are "par-"takers" in the praiſe "of other men's" virtues.

* Dan. xii. 3. James v. 20.

SERMON XXIV.

ON DOMESTIC INSTRUCTION.

GEN. XVIII. 19.

FOR I KNOW HIM THAT HE WILL COMMAND HIS CHILDREN AND HIS HOUSEHOLD AFTER HIM; AND THEY SHALL KEEP THE WAY OF THE LORD, TO DO JUSTICE AND JUDGMENT.

IF there be any character which is truly honourable, it is that of a pious worſhiper and ſervant of GOD, and a diligent promoter of the happineſs of mankind: and if this character can ever obtain an undoubted confirmation; it will receive it from the declaration of him, who knows every thought of our hearts, and every action of our lives. Such was the memorable teſtimony given, in the words before us, to the patriarch Abraham. He had approved himſelf to his Creator by adhering to his worſhip in the midſt of idolatrous nations, by an entire ſubmiſſion to his ſovereign

diſpoſal, and by an active obedience to his will. He had given the cleareſt evidence of his regard for the honour of GOD, and the happineſs of his family and dependents, by inſtructing them in the true religion, and recommending to them the practice of virtue. And the All-ſeeing Obſerver of the ſincerity of his intentions, and the integrity of his conduct, thus graciouſly applauds his ſervices, and enſures his perſeverance. "I know him that he will "command his children and his houſehold "after him; that he will make it the great "buſineſs of his life, to advance and perpe-"tuate in his family the knowledge and prac-"tice of true religion; to lead his children, "his ſervants, and all who ſhall be under his "influence, in the paths of virtue; to pro-"mote the glory of GOD, and the gracious "deſigns of his providence in the happi-"neſs of his creatures, by every method in "his power; by inſtruction, by example, by "authority."

Now, that which was the duty and the praiſe of Abraham, deſerves the attention of every wiſe and conſiderate man in all ſucceeding generations. If it was the honour and

happineſs of the Patriarch to guide his family by the beſt dictates of his reaſon, and the traditions of his forefathers, and further to enlighten and encourage them by the declarations and promiſes of God; it will become the friend of mankind in theſe later ages, to ſpread, with equal diligence and humanity, that better light which he enjoys. He has heard the leſſons of the Heavenly Teacher, "in whom all "the families of the earth are bleſſed."* He has the Religion of Abraham, illuſtrated and improved by the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt. He has "the way of the Lord" more clearly marked out before him. He has the meaſures of "juſtice and judg-"ment," more diſtinctly aſcertained. He is aſſured that "godlineſs is profitable"† in the days of his pilgrimage. He has the everlaſting land of promiſe laid open to his view. Religion, therefore, will be the object of his veneration, and the guide of his life. He will recommend her to all men, as the heavenly guardian of private and ſocial happineſs; of the peace of families, and the good order of nations; of every ſatisfaction here, and every hope hereafter. This will be his

* Gen. xxviii. 14. † Tim. iv. 8.

choice and conduct in every ſituation. If he dwells in a Cottage, and earns his bread by his daily labour, he will be of ſervice to his neighbours, eſpecially to the younger, by ſetting them a good example, in honeſty, ſobriety, induſtry, the care of his family, going conſtantly to the Church and Sacrament; he will ſhew them by his own life, what is their duty, and what will make them happy. If he is in a more eaſy condition; if he has flocks and herds and other ſubſtance; if, inſtead of labouring for others, he has others to labour with him, and for him; he will practice the ſame virtues, with greater benefit to his neighbours: he will, moreover, exerciſe juſtice and kindneſs toward thoſe who live under him; he will ſhew charity to the poor, the ſick, and the aged. If he has been born to riches and independence, or has attained them by ſucceſsful induſtry, the advantages of a competent or affluent fortune will warm the generoſity of his mind, and enlarge the compaſs of his benevolence: the bleſſings of providence ſhowered down upon him will increaſe his piety to heaven, and his good will to man. If he is happy in a liberal education and improved abilities, he will de-

monſtrate by his principles and behaviour, that Religion recommends herſelf to the wiſe and learned, as well as to plainer underſtandings: that an enlightened mind is more clearly impreſſed with the brightneſs of her evidences, and the beauty of her precepts: that ignorance, inattention, or partial information, are the moſt uſual cauſes of infidelity: and that no prejudices involve the underſtanding in ſo impenetrable a cloud, as thoſe which are the offspring of idleneſs, vanity, or vice. Is he dextrous in the methods of worldly prudence? in manufacture and commerce? in other arts of active life? He will ſhew that a reaſonable attention to the wants of this mortal ſtate, is very conſiſtent with a ſerious concern for the weightier intereſts of eternity. He will prove that a good man is the beſt citizen: he advances the welfare of ſociety on earth, while he purſues, and points out, the way to heaven. Laſtly, has he an influence over the minds of others, from a ſocial temper, a lively imagination, or engaging manners? A cheerful, innocent, converſation will recommend the integrity of his life, and the benevolence of his heart. It will appear in

his company, that it is no mark of genius or education, of good ſenſe or good manners, to be profane or indecent; to fill up converſation with any thing diſreſpectful to religion, or inconſiſtent with morality: that the beſt ſource of mirth is a good conſcience; a mind eaſy in itſelf, and benevolent to others: that the genuine pleaſures of ſociety do not ſpring from exceſſes, which load the conſtitution, and bring on diſeaſes, miſery, and death: that wit and feſtivity will ever reign moſt in that amiable converſe, wherein nothing paſſes which may give pain to others, may ſeduce the underſtanding, or corrupt the heart. Thus, briefly, does the friend of Religion, by a firm and diſcreet behaviour, and by the ſilent, inoffenſive, leſſon of a good example, contribute to the advancement of happineſs in the circle, be it ſmaller or larger, wherein he moves: like ſome primary celeſtial orb, while he performs his own proper revolutions, and purſues the track marked out to him by the Governour of the univerſe, he at the ſame time draws others after him; and acts with an influence, well proportioned and beneficial, on the general ſyſtem.

As he will obey the good propenſities of his nature, and the precepts of his religion, in promoting the happineſs of all around him, he will be led by the ſame unerring guides to attend eſpecially to the welfare of his nearer relatives; to thoſe whom Providence has placed more immediately under his protection and government. The firſt and neareſt of theſe are his Offspring. "Can a woman forget her "ſucking child?" is the language of the Prophet,* when he would deſcribe the moſt inviolable and active affection. "Can ſhe leave "that body to periſh, to which ſhe has been "the means of giving life?" But ſurely that miſtaken parent is far more inattentive to the feelings of humanity, who neglects the Everlaſting welfare of her child; and leaves that better part to languiſh in ignorance, and to be expoſed to pollution and miſery, which was intended for a ſtate of knowledge, purity, and happineſs. The good Chriſtian will imitate the conduct of faithful Abraham. It will be his firſt concern to inſtruct his children in the principles of true religion. He will acquaint them early with the important hiſtory

* Iſaiah xlix. 15.

of their creation and redemption. He will direct them to look up to the Almighty, as the author of all things, and the ſovereign diſpoſer of all events; to whom they owe their being and every thing which they enjoy; from whoſe approbation and favour they muſt derive every thing which they hope for. He will teach them how man by tranſgreſſion fell from a ſtate of perfection, and introduced into the world every evil that we feel or fear. He will unfold to them the wonderful diſpenſation, which hath reſtored us to the hopes of pardon and happineſs, by the obedience and ſufferings of the Son of God. Laſtly, he will be frequent and earneſt in explaining to them the Terms of our reconciliation in Chriſt Jeſus; the neceſſity of a virtuous and religious life, if they hope for happineſs in this world or the next. He will particularly inſtruct and enjoin them to be conſtant and attentive in offering their morning and evening prayer to the throne of grace. He will enforce his own private inſtructions, by bringing them to the place of public worſhip; and will inure them early to that eſſential duty, that great inſtrument of piety, a punctual and reverent attendance on the houſe

of GOD. He will carefully watch the effect of his inſtructions in their life and manners. He will ſuffer no neglect, or violation, of chriſtian duty to paſs unnoticed: but will correct, reform, and improve, them, with the mildneſs and attention which become the affectionate parent; at the ſame time with a gravity and authority, ſuitable to the importance of the occaſion, and to an unfeigned reverence of the divine laws. Thus will the man of wiſdom and virtue inſtruct and "command his Chil-"dren to keep the way of the Lord."

His Houſehold alſo, and his ſervants, though not connected by ſo endearing a relation, will enjoy the benefit of his private virtues, and his active benevolence. He will engage their reſpect and confidence, by an equitable, and friendly, behaviour; ſuch as will make their obedience flow from inclination and gratitude, rather than from leſs generous motives; and render them uſeful members of his little community, by making them happy ones. They will then be diſpoſed to liſten to his counſel, and follow his example. And it will ſurely be his earneſt wiſh, to inſtruct and confirm them in ſuch religious principles and conduct, as

will not only promote their comfort and proſperity in this world, but enlarge their views and expectations in another. He who lives, Himſelf, under a conſtant ſenſe of a ſuperintending providence, the author of his being, and the judge of his actions; who enjoys continually the ſatisfaction of a virtuous and orderly converſation; who knows how much the pleaſures of life are heightened, and the evils of it abated, by the expectation of a future and a better ſtate; will feel a generous anxiety, to ſee theſe bleſſings communicated, to thoſe eſpecially who live under his roof, and miniſter to his neceſſities and comforts. In a point of ſuch high importance, he will ſurely give them every advantage, which public inſtruction, or private admonition, may afford. By calling them conſtantly to the houſe of GOD; by ſetting the ſcriptures before them; by recommending to them compendious explanatians of Chriſtian duty; by whatever method his diſcretion may ſuggeſt; he will open to them all proper channels of information and perſuaſion: and will endeavour to fix them in ſuch habits of chriſtian virtue, as may influence their behaviour through the preſent life, and may determine,

under the grace of God, their ſituation in a life to come.

The pious Chriſtian who thus makes his houſe a ſchool of virtue, and ſpreads knowledge and happineſs in the ſmall circle of his own family, will find that his example has a more extenſive influence. The farm, the manufactory, the village, above all, the towns and cities, abound with young inhabitants, whoſe principles and conduct are formed entirely upon the converſation and behaviour of thoſe who are older and wiſer than themſelves. It depends much upon early inſtruction and example, whether the child ſhall with the firſt uſe of language blaſpheme his Maker, devote his early activity to acts of wickedneſs, paſs a profligate life, and fall by the hand of juſtice; or whether he ſhall "remember his Crea-" tor in the days of his youth,"* ſerve him diligently in his riper years, and cloſe a well-ſpent life with hopes full of immortality. Every parent, who brings up his children in the fear of God; every maſter who leads his apprentice, or his ſervant, in the ways of virtue; every perſon who benefits his neighbours by a

* Eccleſ. xii. 1.

good example; adds ſo many friends to the cauſe of religion; and contributes, in his proportion, to the peace and happineſs of the world.

But if the pious Chriſtian, by the bounty of providence, is placed in a ſituation ſuperior to many around him, he is an extenſive bleſſing to the land wherein he dwells. His conſtant attendance on the place of public worſhip, will be a ſtriking admonition to his neighbours and dependents. His reverent demeanour there will recommend to them, in the moſt engaging manner, the beauty of holineſs, and the wiſdom of a uniform, unaffected, piety. The regularity of his life, and the good order of his family, will have a like influence on the private manners and deportment of his neighbours. The native dignity of virtue, together with the advantages of fortune and influence, will impreſs the religious with reverence, and the profane with awe: and a character thus happily adorned with worldly bleſſings, and crowned by the graces of the chriſtian life, will not fail to confirm the pious reſolutions of the good, and repreſs the boldneſs, if not reform the vices, of the wicked.

SUCH is the bleſſed influence of a religious man, "who ruleth well his own houſe."* And what ſhall I ſay more to recommend him to your reſpect and imitation, than that he is thus an inſtrument in the hands of Providence, to promote the honour of his government in the everlaſting happineſs of mankind? I may, indeed, further obſerve to you, what will probably be the domeſtic conſequences of his pious care in the education of his children: how great, and how extenſive, may be its influence in the temporal comfort and proſperity of his family. The ſon that has been trained up in the paths of chriſtian duty, will feel an obligation to the parent who inſtructed him, which will ſtrengthen the ties of nature: and he who owes his virtue and happineſs to their piety and affection, will ſcarce refuſe "to hearken "to his father, or deſpiſe his mother when ſhe "is old."† Where are we ſo likely to find love and concord among brethren, as in a family early inſtructed in that religion, of which benevolence is the diſtinguiſhing virtue? or where, that perfect union of intereſts, that freedom from jarring claims and altercations,

* 1 Tim. iii. 4 † Prov. xxiii. 22.

which blemiſh the virtues, and deſtroy the peace, of families; as among thoſe who have learned, upon the nobleſt principles, to reſtrain their deſires within the bounds of juſtice and charity; and, from an early cultivation of liberal and virtuous ſentiments, will ever feel it far more painful, to offer an injury, than to ſuffer one?

Again, what ſervant can we expect to be ſo attentive to his maſter's intereſts, as him who acts under a ſenſe of duty? who has been taught to regulate his intercourſe with mankind by the dictates of pure religion? who conſiders himſelf as under the conſtant inſpection of a Higher Maſter, who is infinitely wiſe and powerful, to diſcern his ſervices, and to reward them? Can it be expected that a ſervant who is immoral or profane, who has no means afforded him of religious information, no exhortation or incitement to chriſtian goodneſs, will diſcharge his duty with integrity? Will he who has learned no obedience to the laws of God, pay a greater deference to the expectations of man? or will he comply with them any further than ſuits his convenience or inclination? It cannot with any reaſon be

ſuppoſed. He, therefore, who provides for the private inſtruction of his ſervants, who brings them to the place of public worſhip, who leads them by his example and authority in the paths of virtue, promotes the tranquillity and proſperity of his houſe. His ſervants will generally be the moſt induſtrious and the moſt faithful. His piety ſhall return into his own boſom; and ſhall in the way of natural conſequence, as well as by the divine bleſſing, contribute to the peace and happineſs of his family.

And let the pious Parent and Maſter remember, for his further ſatisfaction and encouragement, that the benefit of his good example and virtuous diligence is not confined to the age in which he lives, or to the family which riſes under his government. The child who has inherited his piety, will probably hand it down to his children's children; and entail the bleſſing upon ſucceeding generations. The ſervant who has derived chriſtian knowledge from his care, and learned morality by his example, will one day teach his children, or ſervants, the ſame leſſon of wiſdom; and ſpread the benefit of his own happy education among

diſtant families and provinces. So that lateſt poſterity may feel the gracious influence of his virtues, when he has long been removed to a better ſtate: they may have the higheſt reaſon to rejoice that he has lived, whoſe name, perhaps, and character, are in this world totally forgotten. So divine a thing it is, ſo conducive to univerſal happineſs, ſo honourable and beneficial to ourſelves, to do all the good we can in the time and ſtation which Providence allots to us.

In truth, numberleſs are the opportunities afforded us in every ſituation: more various, perhaps, and more extenſive, than we are apt to imagine. He who is placed as "a city upon "a hill,"* owes protection, inſtruction, and example, to a ſpacious and comprehenſive circle; even to the utmoſt extent of his large horizon. He whoſe ſituation is more lowly and retired, may nevertheleſs contribute, in his proportion, to comfort and enlighten the narrow vale beneath. Though his life and manners have no immediate, or apparent, influence on a kingdom or a province, they will doubtleſs have their due, and viſible, effect within his own boundary. He may advance the beſt intereſts of mankind within his own village, town, or neighbourhood: he may

* Matth. v. 14.

lead them by his example and kind offices in the paths of duty and happineſs. He may encourage ſobriety and induſtry: he may promote good order, regularity, and harmony: he may contribute to the education of youth; and the relief of infirmity and age: he may comfort his neighbour in his affliction: he may ſooth him in the approaches of death. In ſhort, it is impoſſible to paint in too lively colours, how great a bleſſing to himſelf, to his family, to his country, in every ſtation, is the man of Sincere Unaffected Piety: who lays it down as the fundamental principle and rule of his conduct, ſo to enjoy the ſatisfactions of this preſent period, as to promote the great intereſts of the future: ſo to taſte the pleaſures of ſocial life, as to render them always innocent, generally ſubſervient to the final happineſs of himſelf and others: to conſider the world as one great family, to which he is connected by various relations and dependencies; and as he would tremble at the thought of diminiſhing the happineſs of one individual in it, ſo to embrace every occaſion of advancing the welfare of thoſe, who happen to be the companions of his pilgrimage. Thus will he move gently down the ſtream of time: rejoicing in the ſociety of the wiſe and virtuous; improving, by his

advice and example, the thoughtleſs and diſſipated: receiving the goods of life with cheerfulneſs and gratitude; the evils, with compoſure and reſignation; in contemplation of that approaching period, which will open to him a new ſcene of things; wherein the evil ſhall vaniſh, and the good ſhall be enjoyed without allay.

For we are ever to remember—and it is the ſum and completement of every exhortation to a Religious Life—that there will be a day which ſhall place the wiſdom of this conduct in the cleareſt view; when all the families of the earth ſhall appear before their heavenly father, and every one ſhall give an account of himſelf, and of thoſe who were committed to his charge. Can there, I beſeech you, be any conſolation or encouragement in that awful hour, equal to ſuch reflexions as theſe? namely, if a chriſtian perſon can recollect, that, in this his ſtate of trial and preparation for eternity, it had ever been his care and ſtudy, in the firſt place to conform his own life to the precepts of the Goſpel; and, in the ſecond, to lead his children, his family, his dependents, and neighbours, in the ſame path of duty: that, under the grace of God, he had been an humble inſtrument of checking the progreſs of impiety and wickedneſs, and of promoting reli-

gion and morality, in the world: if he ſhall remember that "the children whom GOD had gi-"ven him,"* he had diligently educated in his fear and ſervice: if he ſhall hope that his deſcendants, and the riſing generation in his village, town, or neighbourhood, had bleſſed his memory, and followed his example: nor ſhould any of them meet him in this awful aſſembly, in a ſtate of anguiſh and deſpair, loading him with the ſevereſt of all reproaches, "lo! theſe are the "vices, which I learned in my own family! lo! "theſe are the wounds, with which I was wound-"ed in the houſe of my parents and my friends!"† He will reflect with a holy triumph, that they who were born the heirs of his ſins and infirmities, are now become his coheirs of glory and immortality: that the companions of his earthly pilgrimage, are now his fellow-citizens in that heavenly Jeruſalem, which he had pointed out to them afar off: that they who did eat at his table, and followed him to the houſe of GOD, ſhall now ſit down with him in the kingdom of heaven, adoring, for endleſs ages, the ever bleſſed author of their being, perfection, and happineſs.

* Heb. ii. 13. † Zech. xiii. 6.

THE END.

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